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# THE SISTER'S SON IN THE MEDIEVAL GERMAN EPIC

A STUDY IN THE SURVIVAL OF MATRILINITY

BY

CLAIR HAYDEN BELL

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PUBLICATIONS IN MODERN PHILOLOGY

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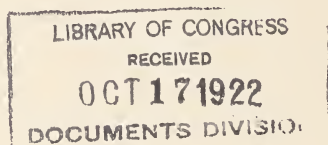
# THE SISTER'S SON IN THE MEDIEVAL GERMAN EPIC

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## PREFACE

We are familiar enough with the law of inertia in the realm of matter, but its equally general operation in the realm of the spirit is far less obvious. Yet there are many habits of thought and speech today which are nothing but survivals of the past by the law of inertia—practices carried into the present long after their origin has been forgotten and the reason for them has ceased to exist. The archaeologist, guided by material relics of the past, is able to trace fairly accurately the course of the physical life of primitive man; the student of philology, folklore, and literature comes to his assistance with a mass of evidence bearing inferentially upon the intellectual and emotional side of prehistoric life. This evidence consists mainly in survivals from earlier periods: words and expressions, ideas and beliefs, manners, customs, and institutions which have come to seem anomalous and irrational because they are no longer in keeping with the times, and from which we can draw valuable conclusions as to the earlier conditions that gave rise to them.

One of the most curious anomalies in the medieval German epic is the closeness of the relation between uncle and nephew, and particularly the fact that it has to do mainly with the maternal uncle, and only infrequently with the paternal. Because of its constant recurrence in the medieval German epic, the uncle-nephew relationship would justify consideration merely as a study of an important literary motif. When, however, it is realized that the subject is one of historical and sociological significance its study appears all the more justified. The following pages present gleanings from medieval German narrative poetry in a search for evidence which may throw light upon the structure of society in prehistoric days.

The subject of the *Sister's Son* has already received considerable attention in different fields.<sup>1</sup> The Middle High German

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Francis B. Gummere: *The Sister's Son in the English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, in: *An Eng. Miscellany*, Oxford, 1901, 133-149; William A. Nitze: *The Sister's Son and the Conte del Graal*, *Mod. Philol.*, Jan., 1912, IX, No. 3; W. O. Farnsworth: *Uncle and Nephew in the Old French Chansons de Geste*, Columbia Univ. Press, N. Y., 1913.

field, however, has not yet been thoroughly and systematically explored.<sup>2</sup>

An alphabetical list of the epics read in this investigation, including the longer narrative poems of secular literature up to the beginning of the 14th century, will be found appended, although by no means all of these furnish illustration. Religious epics, with few exceptions, have been omitted. A list of general works consulted is dispensed with; such bibliographies are available elsewhere.

The writer desires to express his appreciation to Professor Hugo K. Schilling, who awakened his interest in the topic, and to whose generous help and criticism he owes the completion of the following pages.

CLAIR HAYDEN BELL.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
BERKELEY, January, 1920.

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<sup>2</sup> In the Germanic field the earliest reaches have been well covered by Lothar von Dargun: *Mutterrecht und Raubehe*, Breslau, 1883. A monograph upon this subject in the same field has recently been written by Albert W. Aron: *Traces of Matriarchy in Germanic Hero-Lore*, Univ. of Wis. Studies in Lang. and Lit., Madison, 1920. This publication, which is limited to the heroic or national epic, appeared from the press after the present study had been completed.



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### I. KINSHIP IN THE MEDIEVAL GERMAN EPIC

Matriliney<sup>1</sup> is a phenomenon well known to sociologists. By the matrilineal family is meant that form of family organization in which the kinship is traced and determined through the mother, the children being regarded as the relatives, and frequently as the heirs, of the mother and the maternal relatives. The husband's position is relatively unimportant. His adherence to his

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<sup>1</sup> In the words of W. I. Thomas (*Sex and Society*, Chicago, 1906, 66), matriliney is the form of organization based "on the larger social fact, including the biological one, that the bond between mother and child is the closest in Nature." The term 'mother-right' (and similarly 'father-right,' 'nephew-right'), from the German *Mutterrecht*, is in common use. It is a faulty term, both because the English is not a proper equivalent of the German and because there were no rights, in the juridical sense, at the period of time for which the term is used. The term 'matriarchy' is best reserved to indicate female supremacy over all males within the family group; indeed, it is sometimes used to indicate the supremacy of the female in the government of the clan or tribe as well—a form of social organization in which the social tendencies at work in matriliney have been developed to their fullest possible extent. Matriarchy is a rare phenomenon in ethnology.

own brothers and sisters is closer than to his wife and her progeny. In the matrilineal family group the eldest maternal brother exercises the duties of a father to the children. Matrilineal peoples are still found scattered well over the surface of the earth, while with many other peoples plain survivals of a previous matrilineal state have been found. The most tenacious and therefore the most common of these survivals is the peculiar closeness of the relation between the brother and his sister's children.

Since traces of a previous state of matriliney have also been found in Europe, the degree of prominence which the uncle-nephew tie holds in the medieval German epic becomes a matter of interest, as well as the question as to whether the epics cast any light upon the origin of this motif. And although objection might be raised to the late date at which the Middle High German literature was recorded, it is important for our purposes that the forming and recording of these epic plots took place for the most part prior to the breaking up of the kinship ties.

Perhaps the most interesting and significant difference between medieval and modern literature is that of the differing social structures which these literatures reflect. Present-day literature deals with the individual and his problems. To us, the tie of blood is not of predominant importance. Our average families no longer cluster in kin groups about a family homestead or in a family town. The means of transportation have brought about a fluidity of population unknown to the previous generation, and every individual is free to follow the trail of his own interests to the locality which calls him. As soon as the age of economic independence or of marriage is reached, brothers and sisters often scatter to remote points, there to found new families in turn. Beyond our social unit of husband and wife and dependent children there is friendly interest of varying strength, but little coherence in larger kin groups.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A greater degree of kinship solidarity still survives in the Teutonic countries of Europe than in America with its fluid population. The strongest survival of the old kin ties which we have in this country is to be found among the isolated mountaineers of Kentucky and Tennessee, who still adhere to the principle of clan solidarity and practice blood revenge.

Fundamentally different is the structure of society as reflected in our earliest English and German literatures. If the literature of today deals mainly with the individual, the typical medieval German epic is the epic of the kin, the large, closely adhering group of blood relatives. This is impressively shown by the extensive genealogical tables which can be drawn up for many of the medieval epics, illustrative of the kin ties that the plots of these poems involve. In those days, the rights and interests of the kin surmounted those of the individual. The individual standing alone was lost; only those with strong family connections were safe and protected. In primitive days peace, friendship, and relationship were almost identical conceptions. Whoever was foreign to a group was hostile to it; the stranger was without protection and without rights. The very history of some of our present-day words illustrates this fact. The transition in viewpoint to be seen in Latin *hostis*, meaning 'stranger,' 'enemy,' and German *Gast*, English 'guest,' is instructive in this sense. In the epic *Demantîn* we are told, when Gander meets his son without either knowing the identity of the other:

4870

einen *gast* he halden sach  
 des he nicht hette irkant.  
 dâr wordin ros mit sporn gemant  
 zesamene worden sî getreben.  
 di sper doreh di schilde bleben  
 gestochin ûf or beider Brust.

With the change in human relations the meaning of the word as stranger in an unfriendly sense passed into that of stranger in a friendly sense.

Of citations from our epics in which the word *Freund* is used with the meaning 'relative,' any number could be given. In Eilhart's *Tristan*, for instance, the hero has the enmity of his cousin Antrêt:

3160

he was des koninges swestir son  
 und solde Tristrandes nebe sîn.  
 der tûfil senke in in den Rîn!  
 wan, swie he was sîn frûnt,  
 frûntschafft tet he im nicht kunt.

Dietrich declares in the *Biterolf*, explaining why he had assisted his *neve* in warfare against Gunther:

12514                   . . . . daz dicke geschiht  
                          daz friunt friunde gestât:  
                          er ist saelic der in hât  
                          sô ez im gât an die nôt.

Even today the German words *Freund*, *Freundschaft* (dialectically), and Slavic *prijatali* are used in the sense of relative, relationship, kin.

To picture man's complete helplessness at the end of the world on the last day of judgment the *Muspilli* of the 9th century declares that on that day no kin can help one another:

57       dâr ni mac denne mâk andremo helfan vora demo mûspille.

Writing in the same period, the author of the *Heliand* reinforces the scriptural injunction concerning the plucking out of the offending eye and the cutting off of the offending hand in terms more intelligible and more telling to the Teutonic mind.<sup>3</sup> Better to cast thy relative far from thee, he says, however close the kinship may be, than to be led into sin by him:

1496                   . . . . betera is imu than odar,  
                          that he thana friund fan imu   fer faruuerpa,  
                          mithe thes mages   endi ni hebbea thar eniga minnea to,  
                          that he moti eno   up gestigan  
                          ho himilriki,   than sie helligethuing,  
                          bred baluuuti   bedea gisokean,  
                          ubil arbidi.<sup>4</sup>

Banishment from home was the most grievous misfortune which could befall our Germanic ancestors. Of this the phrase, *von sînen mâgen entrunnen*, meaning 'fled from one's country,' our word 'wretch,' a miserable creature (from *wreak*; O. S. *wrecan*, 'to drive into exile'; Goth. *wrikan*, 'to persecute'; Ger. *râchen*, 'to avenge'), and the Ger. *elend*, 'miserable' (from O. H. G. *elilenti*, 'in a foreign country,' 'homeless'), are lingering reminders.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vilmar: *Deutsche Altertümer im Heliand*, Marburg, 1845, 42.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. by Sievers, Halle, 1878.

Drawing a picture of chaotic internal warfare among the Germans, the *Annolied* states that the people killed their own *neven* and thrust the sword into their own bowels; and the *Edda* describes the complete collapse of civilization and the destruction of all order in terms of the violation of relationship ties by brothers' and sisters' sons:

Vǫluspó', 45    Brøðr munu berjask    ok at þónum verðask,  
munu systrungar    sífjum spilla.

The first thing that the hero of the popular medieval epic did, upon encountering a stranger, was to ascertain, if possible, the ancestry or kinship of his opponent; only when he learned this did he know with whom and with what force he had to deal.<sup>5</sup> This is by no means limited to our Germanic civilization; it was the Homeric custom, and is practiced by primitive tribes extant today.<sup>6</sup> Through the cycles of development from wild savagery and barbarity to constantly higher forms, kinship was the sole social bond, and it retained a measure of potency until long after a new and higher principle—that of the state—came into being. The beginning of the state marks the beginning of the decline of clan organization. Before the existence of the state the adherence of the members of the kin group, on the principle of one for all and all for one, was absolutely essential, for the protection not only of property but of life as well. If property was to be defended, if an inroad was to be avenged, if an attack was to be carried out, or an abducted member regained, all branches of the family were called upon for help. Every injury to a kinsman imposed upon the entire kin the sacred duty of revenge.<sup>7</sup> And similarly the entire kin answered for the misdeeds of a single member. At the time of our medieval epics the law itself held them jointly guilty if not equally liable to penalty. The aveng-

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Gud.*, 123, 4; Hartung: *Deutsche Altertümer des NL. und des Gud.*, Götten. 1894, 29.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Müller-Lyer, *Formen der Ehe*, München, 1911, 80, on the Australian tribes.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Freybe, *Altdeutsches Leben*, Gütersloh, 1878, on *Die Sippe und die Blutrache*, 219 ff.



ing of relatives was an impelling motive which the lapse of years did not impair. As the *Krone* remarks:

18836                      Ein alt sprichwort giht:  
                              Alt schult lît und rostet niht.

Thus, although twenty-six years pass before Kriemhilde sees her way to revenge,<sup>8</sup> her purpose does not waver; and Hilde, in the *Gudrun*, waits for thirteen years until the maturing of a new generation of warriors enables her to avenge the abduction of her daughter and the slaying of her husband.

As we shall consider elsewhere,<sup>9</sup> the original essence of the plot of the *Parzivâl* was probably the idea of duty to one's kin and of punishment involved in the violation of that duty. Parzivâl's maternal uncle points out to him his great guilt in the slaying of his blood relative Ither, and in leaving his mother to die of sorrow:

IX, 1279                      dô sprach er "lieber swester sun,  
                              waz râtes möht' ich dir nu tuon?  
                              du hâst dîn eigen verch erslagen.  
                              wiltu für got die schulde tragen,  
                              sît daz ir bêde wârt ein bluot,  
                              ob got dâ reht gerihte tuot,  
                              sô giltet im dîn eigen leben.  
                              \*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
                              mîn swester lac ouch nâch dir têt,  
                              Herzeloyd dîn muoter."<sup>10</sup>

Because of the importance of the blood tie, the epics abound in passages which emphasize relation through common ancestry, and no matter what the relationship is, its discovery is a source of joy and becomes at once the basis of solidarity. The emphasis is usually on common blood through the womb, as:

*J. Tit.*, 924, 4                "Bedenke daz unser muoter beide  
                              ein wip von reiner art gebere."

Artificial relationship is frequently established in the epics through *Blutbrüderschaft*. Entrance upon the latter relation-

<sup>8</sup> *NL*. 1142, 2, and 1390, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. below, p. 141.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Krone*, 29497 ff., which attributes Parzivâl's failure to a violation of the blood tie.

ship was solemnized by a symbolical mixing of the blood. Such a tie exists between Hagen and Walther in the *Waltharilied*, and it is only the slaying of his sister's son by Walther that impels Hagen to break the sacred bond.

Another type of artificial relationship is fosterage. Fosterage is the sending of a child to another household for his rearing and education. This custom was practiced not only among the higher classes in Germany but was still more prevalent in northern and northwestern Europe. A child in fosterage was reared and educated suitably for the position which it was to occupy in life, and the affection which arose from the relationship was very strong.<sup>11</sup> The closeness of the fosterage tie is well expressed in the epic *Gârel*, when the hero Gârel bids farewell to his foster parents Artûs and Guinever:

19756           “Artûs, der liebe herre mîn,  
hât sô wol an mir getân,  
daz ich vil guoten willen hân,  
daz im mîn dienest ist bereit.  
er hât mit grôzer wirdicheit  
mich von kinde her gezogen,  
an werder fuore niht betrogen;  
dâ von hân ich reht dar zuo,  
daz ich spâte unde vruo  
iwer beider êre werben sol.  
vrowe, ir habt an mir sô wol  
getân daz ich billich  
iwer êr sol werben; wan daz ich  
ûf êr allerêrste muot gewan,  
daz kom von iu; ich enkan  
die triwe verdienen nimmer,  
und solt ich leben immer,  
die ir habt an mich geleit.  
ich sol durch iwer wirdicheit,  
die wîl und ich mîn leben hân,  
iu dienen” sprach der werde man.

In the German epic the boy is sent usually to the relatives of his mother, preferably to a maternal uncle. A typical example is seen in Etzel's desire to have his son Ortlieb by Kriemhilde

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Grupp, *Kultur der alten Kelten und Germanen*, München, 1905, 123 ff., 231; Joyce, *Social History of Ancient Ireland*, London, 1907, II, 17.

reared by the latter's brothers. He says to them, when the boy is brought to the table:

1914, 3 "nu seht ir, friunde mîne, diz ist mîn einec sun,  
und ouch iuwer swester: daz mac iu allen wesen frum.

Gevaecht er nâch dem künne, er wirt ein küene man,  
rîch und vil edele, stare und wol getân.  
leb' ich deheine wîle, ich gib' im zwelf lant:  
sô mag iu wol gedienen des jungen Ortliebes hant.

Dar umbe bite ich gerne iuch, lieben friunde mîn,  
swenn' ir ze lande rîtet, wider an den Rîn,  
sô sult ir mit iu fûeren iuwer swester sun,  
und sult ouch an dem kinde vil genaedeclîche tuon.

Und ziehet in zen êren, unz er werde ze man.  
hât iu in den landen iemen iht getân,  
daz hilfet er iu rechen, gewahset im sîn lîp."

In this same epic the niece Herrât is fostered by her aunt Helche, her mother's sister.

Several cases of fosterage are mentioned in the *Gudrun*. Hetel, who is reared by his relative Wate (204, 3 ff.), sends his own son to Wate to be reared by him (574 ff.). And of the heroine *Gudrun* we are told:

575 von Hegelinge lant sant' er s'ze Tenemarke,  
durch zuht ir naehsten mâgen.

In *Alphart's Tod* the two brothers Wolfhart and Alphart are reared by their maternal uncle. Frau Uote, joining Hildebrand in the vain attempt to restrain Alphart from his dangerous outpost duty, reminds him of his long fosterage by them (104, 3; 174, 2 ff.). Similarly in *Rosengarten D*, although the father Amelot is alive and near at hand, the two sons Wolfhart and Sigestap are fostered by their uncle Hildebrant and accompany him on his adventures (81 ff.). Rûdeger and Gotelind, in this same epic, have a sister's son in fosterage (87, 4 ff.).

In the *Rolandsliet* (1482), in *Karl der Grosse* (2083 ff.), and in *Karl Meinet* (441, 71 ff.) reference is made to the fosterage of Roland by his maternal uncle Karl, and Alda and her brother



Oliver have their home with their maternal uncle Gerhart (*Karl. M.*, 500, 29 ff., 65 ff.). Tirrih, or Dietrich, who in these epics takes upon himself the combat against Genelun's nephew Pinabel, is a *neve* and a protégé of Roland's by fosterage (*Rol.* 8823).

In the *Parzivâl* Condwîramûrs and Kardeis are reared by their paternal uncle (XVI, 543 ff.), and Sigûne by her maternal aunt (III, 759 ff.; IX, 1322 ff.). Ither, Utepandragûn's sister's son, is fostered by his uncle (III, 877 ff.), and Gâwân refers several times to his fosterage by his maternal uncle Artûs (X, 769; XIII, 1047; XIII, 1220).

In the *Titurel*, "Kîôtes kint Sigûne alsus wuohs bî ir muomen" (32, 1), and Gahmuret rears his mother's sister's son Schionatulander (*Tit.*, 47, 1; *J. Tit.*, 676, 1). When dying, Gahmuret reminds Schionatulander of this long fosterage in adjuring him to care for his wife (*Tit.*, 139, 1; *J. Tit.*, 925, 1).

Similarly, in all the epics of the Arthurian cycle, we find various sisters' sons in the fosterage of King Artûs.

In *Tristan und Isolde* not only is Tristan fostered by his uncle, King Marke, but also two other sisters' sons, Andret and Tantrisel. In *Partonopier und Meliur*, the young nephew Partonopier is reared from early childhood by his maternal uncle, King Clogiers (256 ff.), and in *Heinrich und Kunigunde* the maternal aunt, Kunigunde, fosters her sister's daughter from the time the child is weaned (3577 ff.).

In Ulrich's *Willehalm*, when Willehalm and Kyburg part from Emperor Loys and his wife (Willehalm's sister), Kyburg successfully asks for the privilege of taking along her husband's nephew and niece, saying to the mother:

CCCXVI, 2      "Mîn sūeziu frouwe, ich ger, daz ich  
in urloub mit mir füere hin  
Alyzen, die jungen keiserin,  
und Fivianzen den klâren.  
daz leben von mînen jâren  
wil ich in liebe mit in vertuon.  
und gebent uns die heiden suon,  
so ziuch ich si alse mîniu kint  
durch die liebe, daz si sint  
von des markgraven (Willehalms) sippe komen.

Chivalry made much of the practice of fosterage and contributed a new incentive for it: the father's desire to have his son trained by a knight of particular prominence. The custom itself is of much earlier origin. Anwyl suggests that it was connected with some primitive taboo which forbade the father to see his children until they had reached a certain age.<sup>12</sup> Gwynn infers:<sup>13</sup> "Whatever the origin of fosterage may have been, the evidence here collected indicates that it is most likely to develop and assume importance in a disturbed and unorganized condition of society, where the individual, not being able to rely upon a central authority or on a corporate social instinct, is led to seek security by laying great stress on family ties." For our theory it is interesting to note that in Scandinavia, the portion of Germanic territory most removed from Roman influence and thought by some to have been the cradle of the Germanic race, the custom of fosterage attained its widest diffusion,<sup>14</sup> the very term fosterage (*fostr*) coming from a word that is peculiar to Scandinavian speech. Although with the passage of time fosterage came to be carried on for purely commercial reasons, there is strong reason to believe that in early times it was undertaken only by persons who stood in a certain degree of consanguinity to the parents. We have seen that in the German epic it is most frequently uncle and nephew who stand in this relationship.<sup>15</sup> Fosterage is clearly not the primitive form of child rearing practiced in the matrilineal period, since it involves separation from the mother. In all probability it originated in the transitional stage from matriliney to patriliney. Where matriliney prevails, the children belong to the mother and her kin rather than to the father and the paternal kin. As matriliney yields to patriliney many of the customs and viewpoints of the former social organization

<sup>12</sup> *Enc. Religion and Ethics*, VI, 109.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Its prevalence is not only attested by examples met in every Norse and Icelandic saga, but also by the native codes, which legislated specially for this relationship. Cf. Guðmundsson und Kålund, in Paul: *Grundriss der Germ. Phil.*, III, 415 ff.

<sup>15</sup> This has not escaped the observation of other writers. Cf. Chadwick, *Orig. of Eng. Nation*, Cambridge, 1907, 334; Weinhold, *Die d. Frauen*, 3. Aufl., Wien, 1897, I, 93; Farnsworth, *op. cit.*, 47.

linger on. The idea of the child's belonging to the maternal kin gives way but slowly. The mother, desiring to maintain the older and stronger ties to her own people, resorts to the device of having her children fostered by her kin.<sup>16</sup> Without doubt fosterage was a social event of great tenacity, strengthening kinship bonds and solidifying the tribal system.<sup>17</sup>

The German epics return repeatedly to the theme of the inherent and instinctive attraction of kin for kin. So powerful was the tie of blood relationship felt to be that it was supposed to assert itself inevitably even in those who were unaware of their common descent. A society which considered the members of the kindred group as members of a single organic body quite naturally entertained the view that blood is potent to find its way to blood.<sup>18</sup>

~ With regard to the terms used to denote the various kinds and degrees of relationship, the significant difference between those of today and those of the middle ages lies in the now abandoned distinction between maternal and paternal relatives. The word for the mother's brother was in Latin *avunculus*, in German *ôheim*; for the father's brother, Lat. *patruus*, Ger. *Vetter* (now meaning 'cousin'); for the mother's sister, Lat. *matertera*, Ger. *Muhme*; for the father's sister, Lat. *amita*, Ger. *Base*. For the children of a brother or sister there were originally no special terms in Latin, the circumlocutions *fratris filius*, *sororis filius* being used, until the words *nepos*, *neptis*, originally meaning 'grandchildren,' took on these meanings. Similarly, in Germanic, together with the expressions *swester suon*, *swester tochter*, *bruoder tochter*, we find the terms *neve* and *niftel*, which have the predominant meaning of sister's son or daughter.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> By way of illustration it may be noted that in the Dutch portion of New Guinea a boy belongs to his mother's tribe and wears its distinctive dress, even when he lives with his father's people; and in some of the Arab tribes of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan the wife returns to her own home for the birth of every child. *Enc. R. and E.*, VIII, 429.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 108; Weinhold, *Altnord. Leben*, Berlin, 1856, 285.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the writer's: "The Call of the Blood in the Mediaeval Ger. Epic," *Mod. Lang. Notes*, XXXVII, Jan., 1922, 17 ff.

<sup>19</sup> For the etymology of these terms see Kluge: *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, and for a complete discussion of Indo-European relationship terms

With all these terms, what may be called their reciprocal use was quite common. It often occurs in the epics that the mother's brother, addressed as "*ôheim*" by his nephew, uses the honoring title in return address; or the nephew, addressed as "*neve*" by his uncle, uses the same address in return; so that *oheim* and *neve* may mean either 'uncle' or 'nephew,' *muhme* and *niftel* either 'aunt' or 'niece.'<sup>20</sup> There are also occasions when these terms are used as complimentary titles of people who bear no blood relationship to the speaker, and even more frequently they are used in the sense of a distant relative in general. In a very large number of cases we have no evidence at all wherewith to prove the precise sense in which the term is used, and there has been a great deal of carelessness on the part of editors of the various epics in the offhand use of the modern forms of the medieval relationship terms regardless of the changes in meaning.<sup>21</sup> The difficulty in determining the exact meaning of the relationship term in specific instances is often insuperable, not only because the epic frequently fails to make its usage clear but also because the tradition of relationship varies greatly in the different epics employing the same characters. Far more troublesome still is the fact that not infrequently we find inconsistent usage of a relationship term within one and the same epic.<sup>22</sup>

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see Delbrück: *Indogerm. Verwandtschaftsnamen*, in: *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Classe der Königlich-sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, XI, 379, Leipzig, 1890, and Wallis: *Indogerm. Relationship Terms as Historical Evidence*, Amer. Anthropol., 1918, 419 ff.

<sup>20</sup> The reciprocal use of a relationship term rests, of course, upon analogy. The *Demantîn* even contains a passage in which an uncle refers to his niece as *oheim* (1387).

<sup>21</sup> Thus Walz, ed. of the *Gârel*, calls Artûs and Gârel *Oheim* and *Neffe* when they are apparently but second cousins; and he translates *neve* as applied to Klarîs by *Neffe*, when Klarîs is but a cousin by marriage.

<sup>22</sup> Inconsistency within an epic even with regard to the name of one and the same character is illustrated by the *Karlmeinet*, where one character is variously called: Fuckelmet, Enquelmet, Volquin, and Fuckas; and another: Elemant, Elinant, Elinas and Elmant. In the *Gârel* Amelot is designated as Ekunaver's *vetern barn* (13701), *neve* (14590), and *veter* (16896). It is a confusion of similar nature but of greater degree when we find Loki fighting Logi in the prose *Edda*, the recorder of that legend failing to perceive the identity of the two; and when we find Gawein and Walwan, who are in fact one and the same person, standing side by side as knights of the Grail in *Lohengrin* (ed. by H. Rückert, Quedlinburg and Leipzig, 1858, 531, 541).



Nor is this at all surprising when we consider how the various legends and the epics which grew from them were handed down for centuries by word of mouth alone, and how intricate and multifarious the relationships in an epic plot usually are. It must further be borne in mind that in the period when these epics were recorded in their present form the most significant thing to the author was the mere fact of relationship in general. Wherever and in whatever degree such relationship existed or was detected, it effected harmony, support, cohesion. Accuracy of designation seemed, therefore, of secondary importance; all too frequently for us, the poet was able to meet the necessity of the case by the use of the indefinite word '*mâg*.' These considerations all add to the difficulties of the present study. But the important facts which we note in the study of relationships in the epics are these: that of all relationships those through the mother predominate, the tie between the uncle and his sister's son being the most emphasized and exalted of all; and that of the two terms meaning 'uncle,' the word *Oheim*, meaning the 'mother's brother,' finally prevails for both the maternal and the paternal uncle, a process in which we see the working of the same matrilineal tendency that has left numerous other imprints upon the German language.<sup>23</sup>

#### THE FATHER

The proper appreciation of the relation which the uncle bears to his nephew in the epic involves a scrutiny of the other human relationships. These will be briefly considered here, while the uncle and nephew, as the phase of kinship which has our central interest, will be treated in a separate chapter. What traces, if any, does the epic reveal with respect to the status of the primitive father?<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Cf. below, 97-100.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Kohler, *Zeitschr. für vergl. Rechtswissenschaft*, IV, 1883, 266 (the italics are his): "Dass bei fast allen Völkern in einem bestimmten Stadium der Entwicklung die Vaterschaft unberücksichtigt bleibt und nur das Verhältnis des Kindes zur Mutter und zu denen, welche mit ihm aus demselben Mutterschosse stammen, in seiner sittlichen und rechtlichen Bedeutung anerkannt wird, ist ein *unzweifelhafter Satz der ethnologischen*

The Germanic father was a despot. He held power of life and death over his family, and many traces of his sternness linger in the epic. This is especially observable in his treatment of his wife,<sup>25</sup> and, in lesser degree, of his daughter. Farnsworth, in his study of kin relations in the Old French epic, finds the father stern and cruel toward his sons, exercising his *patria potestas* with a heavy fist.<sup>26</sup> There is indeed noticeable in the German epics a sternness of the father as compared with the gentleness of the mother such as flows naturally and inevitably from the difference in sex characteristics. But the German epics do not reveal anything comparable to the cruelty, injustice, and hostility of the father to the son which Farnsworth finds in the Old French chansons. On the contrary, where the father appears in connection with his sons he is generally united with them by the bond of affection, lending them support, fighting beside them shoulder to shoulder, avenging them and being avenged by them, passing on his heritage to them, and evincing all the emotions that would be expected of a father. At the same time, however, there is a very pronounced tendency in many of the epics to relegate the father to a position of minor importance or to ignore him altogether,<sup>27</sup> and to emphasize and glorify instead another relationship, that between the maternal uncle and his nephew. Apart from the epics in which the absence of the father is naturally accounted for by his death, there are others in which he receives no mention whatever; others again in which he is alluded to, but left entirely in the background; and still others where he appears recurrently (as in the matri-

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*Jurisprudenz.* Gewöhnlich geht erst einer späteren Periode die Idee der Vaterschaft auf, und mit ihr die Idee der väterlichen Verwandtschaft sammt allen jenen Folgerungen, welche unser modernes Familienleben charakterisieren; und auch dann bleiben nicht selten Überreste früherer Anschauungen im Leben des Volkes, wie im Leben der Sage zurück, welche unverstanden bleiben solange man sie nicht als die letzten Residuen früherer mächtiger organischer Bildungsgesetze erkannt."

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *NL.*, 862 f.; 894 f.; *Ort. A.*, 372 ff.; *Erec*, 6521 ff.; *Parz.*, V, 1218 ff.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, 21 ff.

<sup>27</sup> In this respect the results of our observation agree rather with W. M. Hart in his study of human relationships in the Old English ballad (*Harvard Studies in Philol. and Lit.*, XI, 1907), where he finds the father conspicuous by his absence.

local marriages described below)—a primitive tendency which was revived by the roving, adventurous life of chivalry. This frequent "death," entire omission, or slighting of the father seems explainable largely by the unsettled conditions of the middle ages. Warfare kept him much away from home and often resulted in his early death. The mother's brothers would then occupy the foreground as the only remaining protectors. But the cases in which the father is ignored when alive, the comparative prominence of the mother and her kin, and the overshadowing prominence of the avuncular bond seem to justify the suggestion that unconscious social tendencies, lingering from the matrilineal period in which the male was but loosely attached to his wife and children, may have had some force in determining the father's relatively unimportant position in the epic.

In the *Ruodlieb* no reference whatever is made to the hero's father, and in the home where Ruodlieb's nephew finds a bride the mother is a "widow." The father of the royal Burgundian family in the *Nibelungenlied* is dead. In the *Ortnit* the reference is always to the mother and her brother. Although the father is living,<sup>28</sup> the position which we would have expected him to fill is occupied by the maternal uncle Ylias, to whom the nephew declares:

55, 2

"ich wil dich ze vater kiesen:  
du bist der vater mîn!"

In the *Gudrun* we are told that Horant is the sister's son of Wate and of Hetel, but to his father no allusion is made. In *Alphart's Tod* the hero is in the fosterage of his maternal uncle Hildebrand. In those critical situations where the father would naturally appear—at the time of the vain attempt to restrain Alphart from his fatal undertaking, and at his departure—no allusion is made to him. Other poems name Amelolt, Hildebrand's brother-in-law, as the father, but in this epic Amelolt appears only in the spurious stanzas and without any indication

<sup>28</sup> We may infer from 161 ff. that the mother's husband was alive. The supplying of the dwarf Alberich as Ortnit's illicit sire has the appearance of an inorganic element. Cf. Amelung: *Ort.*, Introd., XX.

of relationship to Alphart. In the *Jüngere Titirel* Schionatulander's father Gurzeigrin is named but plays no part. It is the mother's kin that are in the foreground. In *Mai und Beaflo* no reference whatever is made to the father of the hero Mai, who is living with his mother Eliacha, in close contact with the maternal uncle. In the *Partonopier* the father is nowhere mentioned by name. Only the fresh news of his death late in the poem indicates that up to that point he had been alive.

The prevailing type of marriage described in the epics is patrilocal, i.e., the woman leaves her kin to live among the relatives of her husband. This is well shown in the cases of Kriemhilde and Brünhilde in the *Nibelungenlied*. Kriemhilde's isolation from her own kin in her union with Sifrid is specifically pointed out:

1081, 4 si hete lützel künnes under Sifrides man. (Cf. 1082, 1085.)

A considerable trace of the opposite type of union is found, however, in which the roving male, far removed from his own home and kin, marries and lives among the kin of his wife, often gaining property or even the crown through her hand. These matrilocal marriages are generally of a temporary character, the husband either leaving the wife to return periodically, or deserting her permanently, usually soon after she has become pregnant. The offspring, growing up in the care of the mother, is naturally associated with her kin. The *Parzivâl* furnishes us with an illustration of the effect of matrilocal marriage upon the life of the offspring in Feirefiz and Parzivâl. They are sons of the same father, Gahmuret, but by different matrilocal marriages. Feirefiz, son of the heathen queen Belakâne, and reared by her among her people, is likewise a heathen and swears by the gods of his mother and of his heathen land (XV, 433 ff.); whereas Parzivâl, reared by Herzeloide, is, like his mother, a Christian, and his life is cast in the mould of her people.

These matrilocal marriages, however, are found almost wholly in the later epics of the period in which French and Oriental influences were strong. For this reason there is doubt as to their



value as evidence of earlier social conditions among the Teutons. The roving life of chivalry<sup>29</sup> and the crusades would seem to furnish adequate explanation of these episodes. On the other hand, these motives are common to most early literatures; and some of these later epics, with their episodical structure and their kinship to the fairy tale, preserve certain primitive traits not to be found in the earlier German epics. Chivalry itself seems in certain of its phases—in the wandering life of the male, the resultant promiscuity, and the high position of woman—to be a cyclic recrudescence of primitive social phenomena. Chadwick, in his discussion of the prominence of matrilocal marriage in North Germanic tradition,<sup>30</sup> indicates the belief that this is an old element. Support is lent to this view by the occurrence, in some of the epics, of marriages between a woman and the slayer of her husband<sup>31</sup> or even of her father,<sup>32</sup> the woman, moreover, usually taking the initiative. The fact that the duty of blood revenge does not bar these marriages suggests a sporadic survival of traditions according to which the marriage relation is less close than blood kinship, and the bond between father and offspring is but slight. Periodic sex union and the wandering of the male are motifs extending back in Germanic literature to the period of the myth.

In close logical connection with these matrilocal marriages of the errant male is the motif, common in the German epic as in most early literatures, of the meeting of father and son unknown to each other. Either the long absent father returns, or the son, grown to young manhood, leaves the mother in quest of the male parent whom he has never known or seen. The meeting usually results in combat. The most familiar illustration of

<sup>29</sup> Cf. the conflict between enchaining love and knightly impulses and duties as expressed in *Erec*, 9417 ff., and in *Mai u. B.*, 101, 29.

<sup>30</sup> *Op. cit.*, 332 ff.

<sup>31</sup> *Daniel*, 6306 ff., 6754 ff.; *Iwein*, 1610 ff.; *Demantín*, 3321 ff., 3454 ff. Also *Apoll.*, 19815 ff.

<sup>32</sup> *Lanzelet*, 4308 ff. Cf. Dargun, *Mutterrecht*, 119: "Weder in deutscher noch in skandinavischer Vorzeit scheint es—ebensowenig wie in der keltischen Sage—ungewöhnlich gewesen zu sein, dass ein Held die Tochter seines erlegten Gegners ehelicht."

this motif is the old *Hildebrandslied* of the 8th century. There, just as in the folk song recorded much later, the father Hildebrand has been away from home for thirty (thirty-two) years. Although his absence is linked to an historical occurrence (banishment with Dietrich), we have to do here with a motif leading back to the primitive stage of the race when the male was progenitor but not socially a father. Hildebrand gives expression to the wandering spirit of the unattached male in the words:

7, 3                   “mir ist bei all mein tagen  
zu raisen aufgesetzt.  
zu raisen und zu fechten  
biss auf mein hinefart,  
das sag ich dir vil jungen  
drumb grawet mir mein bart.”

In *Biterolf und Dietleib* the father steals secretly away from his wife Dietlind, and makes his way to Etzel's court. The son, Dietleib, grows to young manhood, learns from his mother of his missing father, and, despite Dietlind's efforts to retain him, sets out in quest of his unknown parent (2261 ff.). While father and son are fighting in Etzel's army, they encounter each other and engage in combat until separated by Rüdiger, from whom they at last learn their relationship. In the *Demantîn* Gander encounters his son Gerant. Not having seen each other for twenty years, they engage in battle, which terminates happily in their mutual identification (4870 ff.). In the *Wigamur* the hero is about to champion the cause of Atrocles against his own unknown father, but the latter discovers his son's identity in time (4141 ff.). In the *Reinfried* the father Rennewart meets his son Malfer. Neither knows the other, and a combat is barely averted (23404 ff.). In the *Parzivâl* the son Feirefiz, who sprang from the last embrace of Gahmuret with Belakane before the father's desertion, starts out to find his unknown sire. And similarly in the *Wigalois*, amidst the tears of his mother Florie, who had been left pregnant by her husband Gawan, the hero starts out in quest of his missing father (379 ff.).

The connection between the motif of combat between father and son and matriliney is aptly illustrated by a tale current among the Ingush of the Caucasus. A man by the name of Tschopa has relations with a woman who lives in the woods and who bears him two daughters. In order to test Tschopa's bravery she leaves him alone in the woods one day, telling him that at midnight he will see the man of the woods. True enough, at midnight a monster appears, and Tschopa shoots him, whereupon the dying creature exclaims: "Alas that you have shot me, for I am the brother of the woman with whom you live!" A son springs from Tschopa's union with the woman, and as he grows up Tschopa begins to fear that the youth may avenge the death of his mother's brother. The father therefore avoids the woods, but nevertheless one day he meets his son. A battle ensues in which the son avenges his uncle by seriously wounding and robbing his father.<sup>33</sup>

#### BROTHER AND SISTER

Close indeed is the tie between brother and brother in the German epic. Representing the young and active generation of fighters, the brothers are naturally in the foreground of action, and with exceptions so few that the picture is in no wise marred, they appear in intimate association, living in constant coöperation, and standing shoulder to shoulder as comrades in arms.<sup>34</sup> The *Jüngere Titurel* presents the medieval viewpoint when it pronounces brothers to be of one body (3524 ff.).

<sup>33</sup> Darinsky, *Zeitschr. für vergl. Rechtswissenschaft*, XIV, 1900, 160 ff. In his *Sohrab and Rustem*, London, 1902, Murray Anthony Potter has made a study of this epic theme of combat between father and son, showing its wide prevalence in the popular tradition and literature of many peoples, and ascribing its origin to matrilineal conditions.

<sup>34</sup> Such inseparable comrades are Gunther, Gernot, and Giselher, as well as Hagen and Dankwart in the *NL.*, Wolfrat and Astolt, Fritelen and Imbrecken, Etzel and Bloedelin, Liudegast and Liudeger in *Bit.*, Hildebrand and Ilsum in *Alp.* and *Ros.* and Diether and Dietrich in *Rab.* In the various versions of *Wolfd.* the hero is deeply wronged by his brothers, who threaten both his life and his inheritance, yet he refuses to kill them. The heinousness of fratricide is well illustrated in the *Krone*, where the deed brought disaster and blight upon the entire kin (29497 ff.).

But close as brother is bound to brother, the bond between brother and sister is represented in the epics as one of still greater love and tenderness.<sup>35</sup> The chief tragical motif of the *Nibelungenlied* lies in the circumstance that it is the oldest brother who causes the slaying of his sister's husband, the outraged sister killing her brothers in turn to accomplish her revenge. But the *Nibelungenlied* as we have it by no means represents the original version of the legend; it is highly significant that in the older Norse form of the saga it is not her brothers whom Gudrun (Kriemhilde) kills, but, on the contrary, her husband Atli upon whom she wreaks her vengeance, because of his treachery to her brothers. This is much more in keeping with primitive views,<sup>36</sup> and points indubitably to a period when the blood bond between brother and sister was closer than the tie between husband and wife.

A typical emphasis upon the brother-sister bond occurs in the *Short Sigurd Lay* of the *Edda*. When Gudrun awakes with horror to find herself sprayed with the blood of her fatally wounded husband, the latter comforts her with the words:

22 (B. 25)                      'gráta þu, Guþrún!  
                                      suá grimliga,  
                                      brúþr frumunga!  
                                      þér bræþr lifa!'<sup>37</sup>

A further interesting illustration of this close bond is found in the various versions of *Tristan*. Isolde II, the daughter of King Havelin, appears under the protection and dominance of her brother Kehenis. It is this brother who praises the sister's beauty to Tristan and who is instrumental in her marriage to him. In Heinrich's *Tristan*, it is the brother whom Tristan first asks for her hand. It is the brother who discovers that Tristan has had no relations with her throughout the entire first year of their

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Wackernagel, *Kleinere Schriften*, Leipzig, 1872, I, 32, and Gerwinus, *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung*, 5. Aufl., I, 95 ff.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Grimm, *Deutsche Heldensage*, 3. Aufl., Gütersloh, 1889, 7 ff.; Hartung, *op. cit.*, 20 ff.

<sup>37</sup> "Do not weep, Gudrun, so bitterly, young wife, you have brothers!" *Saimundar Edda*, Detter und Heinzel, Leipzig, 1903.



married life, and who, apprehending eventual desertion of the girl, plans Tristan's death in revenge. When the parents ask Isolde if she is willing for the marriage, she answers:

460                    "Swaz iuwer wille guoter  
                      ist unde Kâedînes,  
                      des lieben bruoder mînes,  
                      daz ist ouch wol der wille mîn."

And when Tristan wishes to leave and go to Artus, the mediation is again through the brother, who asks her:

1488                    "îsôt mîn swester, wil ab duo  
                      gunnen im der reise?"

It is of frequent occurrence that the brother exercises control over the hand of his sister, even though in some cases the father is living. Thus Willehalm, in Ulrich's epic, gives his sister in marriage to King Loys (XXXV, 8 ff.). In *Heinrich und Kunigunde* Heinrich gives his sister Gisele in marriage to King Stephan (2107 ff.). In *Seifrid* Turkoit gives his sister Soys in marriage to Anziflor (253, 5 ff.). In *Garel* Eskilabon disposes of the hand of his sister in marriage to Wilhalm (373 ff.). In *Meier Helmbrecht* Gotelind is completely under her brother's spell, and it is he who arranges and carries out her marriage with Lemberslind (1279 ff.). There are, to be sure, a few instances of hostility between brother and sister, as in the *Nibelungenlied*, and in the cases of Kandalion and Antonie in the *Tandareis*, Gotegrin and Genover in the *Krone*, and of Willehalm and his sister in Wolfram's *Willehalm*; but these are rare exceptions.

The German epic, folk song, and fairy tale depict in countless variations the brother as the confidant and faithful protector of the sister. And when the father dies this personal relationship becomes a legal one, for the guardianship of the mother and of the unmarried sisters passed according to old laws to the brothers, and specifically to the oldest brother.<sup>38</sup> The brother of the wife

<sup>38</sup> Thus the opening verses of the *Nibelungenlied* find Kriemhilde under the protection and guardianship of her brothers:

4    Ir pfâgen drie kûnege    edel unde rîch,  
          Gunther unde Gêrnôt,    die recken lobelîch,  
          und Gîselher der junge,    ein ûz erwelter degen.  
          diu frouwe was ir swester,    die fûrsten heten s'în ir pflegen.

was the most important link in the union of two *sippen* which were connected by marriage.<sup>39</sup> Even when a daughter was married and parted from her family, the bonds between brother and sister were not entirely severed. We have many instances in the epics where help is extended by the brother to the sister even after she has passed into the control of a husband;<sup>40</sup> and her husband is always confident of the active assistance of his wife's brother.<sup>41</sup> Her children, of course, are under the same protection. Here we come upon that intimate and close tie which is our special study, namely, that of uncle and sister's son; for the nexus between uncle and nephew is the sister as mother. This is shown by the phrase which is repeated again and again in the epics, as in *Biterolf* 671, where the uncle says to his sister's son:

mîn swester was diu muoter dîn.

Why, it might well be asked, if the avunculate is due to matrilineal blood relationship, is the tie between uncle and sister's son more prominent in the epic than that between brother and sister, since the blood bond between the latter two is even closer than the bond between the former?<sup>42</sup> The explanation is to be found in part in the fact that although the female may occasionally appear as an Amazon in battle,<sup>43</sup> it is naturally impossible for her to occupy an equally prominent part in the heroic action in association with the combatant male. But there is a further important factor. The influence of the brother in his sister's behalf is to some extent paralyzed by his youthful age. With the passing of time and the marriage of the sister the maturity of the brother increases, so that as maternal uncle he occupies a

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Hoffmann: *Verwandtschaft mit der Sippe der Frau*, Breslau, 1911, *passim*.

<sup>40</sup> *NL.*, 1292; *Gar.*, 2806 ff.; *Mel.*, 2264 ff.

<sup>41</sup> *Laur. u. Walb.*, 575 ff.; *Wolfd. A.*, 166 ff.; *Iwein*, 4730 ff.; *Wilh. v. Ost.*, 11469 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Thus Gummere finds it an anomaly that whereas in the English and Scottish popular ballads there is no great emphasis on the love of brother and sister, stress is laid on the bond between brother and sister's son, a far less obvious matter. *Op. cit.*, 135.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Frau Brîde in *Orendel*, Brünhilde in the *NL*.

similar position toward his nephew with respect to age and generation as the father occupies toward his son. It is therefore entirely natural that the influence wielded by a man as mother's brother surpasses the influence which he was able to exercise in younger years as brother.<sup>44</sup> Protector and protégé belong characteristically not to the same, but to two different generations.

#### THE MOTHER

If the avunculate, which we shall treat in a following chapter, is a survival from primitive matrilineal times, we should expect to find the woman occupying as mother, too, a very prominent place in the epic, and the bond between mother and child represented as one of sacred closeness. Nor are we disappointed. Although she is unable to bear arms, and, like the male, win heroic prominence, the mother is nevertheless omnipresent, her spirit is always felt. While the father is frequently ignored or but scantily mentioned, the mother, her brothers, and her kin form the framework around which the plot of the typical epic is built. Brooding over her household of children, her love for them is never failing. It is to her rather than to the father that the children usually turn, and we find complete substantiation of Klemm's declaration:<sup>45</sup> "Unter allen Pflichten wird keine so selten verletzt, als die Mutterpflicht." As was pointed out above, warfare kept the father much away from home during the turbulent middle ages, and often resulted in his early death. This left the mother as the head of the household; and the closer association of the mother with the home enshrines her deeply in the hearts of her children. The significance of the mother's prominence in the epics in comparison with the father's position therefore can not be over-estimated. Yet it is apparent that the more the male parent is absent or detached from his wife and children the stronger are the tendencies toward matrilineal organization within the kin group; and the comparative prominence of the mother and the greater strength of the maternal

<sup>44</sup> Dargun, *Studien zum ältesten Familienrecht*, Leipzig, 1892, 82 ff.

<sup>45</sup> *Die Frauen*, Dresden, 1855, II, 216.

as against the paternal bond in the epic harmonize well with the theory of primitive Teutonic matriliney. Back of the maternal prominence as well as of the unimportance of the father as reflected in this early literature, primitive social tendencies may still have been an unconsciously formative force.

In the *Hildebrandslied*, the *Ruodlieb*, *Nibelungenlied*, *Gudrun*, *Biterolf und Dietleip*, *Ortnit*, *Parzivâl*, *Partonopier und Meliur*, and *Mai und Beaflo*, as well as in other epics of minor importance, the mother acts as the family head, the father being dead, absent, or alive but ignored, and there are numerous cases in which the father's attachment to the wife is temporary only, the progeny growing up solely in the mother's care. In the case of Uote, who presides over the royal Burgundian family in the *Nibelungenlied*, Wackernagel<sup>46</sup> even sees significance in the name, suggesting a possible connection with Skt. *udara*, Lat. *uterus*, carrying us back to the kin-conception of woman; and Grimm<sup>47</sup> places the name in *Ablaut* relation to *atta*, with the meaning *Stammutter*, *Ahnfrau von Heldengeschlechtern*.

There is a pronounced tendency not only to name the child after the maternal kin and after the uncle in particular, but also to designate the children in terms of the mother as '——'s child.' Thus in the *Nibelungenlied* the royal children of Burgundy are referred to as:

*das Uotenkint* (126, 1).

*der schoenen Uoten kint* (291, 3; 2188, 1; 2295, 1).

*der edelen Uoten kint* (717, 2; 865, 3; 1406, 3; 1627, 3).

*vroun Uoten kint* (703, 2).

*der schoenen Uoten sun* (1213, 1).

*den Uoten kinden* (1723, 3).

*diu kint der schoenen Uoten* (1517, 1).

*diu Uoten kint* (2100, 1).

*der junge sun vroun Uoten* (1970, 1).

In the case of Uote's children this might be considered to be due to the fact that the father is dead. But examination of usage in

<sup>46</sup> *Wörterbuch*, 342; cf. Pearson, *Chances of Death*, London, 1897, II, 132

<sup>47</sup> *Z. f. d. A.*, I, 21.



this and other epics shows that this is at least not the only reason. Other characters in this epic are quite commonly referred to in the same manner, though their fathers are living. Sifrid is called both *Sigemundes sun* or *kint* (124, 4, etc.) and *daz Sigelinde kint* (47, 1, etc.). The young *Markgräfin von Pöchlarn* is not mentioned by name in the entire epic, but is always called *der Gotelinde tochter* (1322, 3, etc.). In other epics where the father is living we find the children commonly designated after the mother. Dietleip, in *Biterolf und Dietleip*, is at times called *daz Biterolfes kint*, especially when he is associated with the father in action, but more frequently *daz Dietlinde kint*.<sup>48</sup> And throughout the *Rabenschlacht* the sons of Etzel and Helche are preferably referred to as *vroun Helchen kint*.<sup>49</sup> This nomenclature, with its emphasis upon the maternal parent, may be reasonably explained in part as a matrilineal tendency.<sup>50</sup> Other reasons, however, may be advanced for the practice.<sup>51</sup> It has already been noted that when the name of an individual is suppressed and he is mentioned in terms of relationship to others, designation after the father also occurs. Furthermore, the designation is not always after the parent; we find the parent designated at times after the children, as: *vater der Hilden* for Hagen (*Gud.*, 526, 3), *vater der Kutrunden* (*Gud.*, 642, 3), and the relationship is also expressed in terms of husband or wife, brother or sister, uncle or sister's son; e.g., for Sifrit, *der Kriemhilde man* (*NL.* 1048, 1); for Kriemhilde, *daz Sîfrides wîp* (*NL.* 1066, 1); for Ortwin, *Kudrunen bruoder* (*Gud.* 1095, 4); for Kudrun, *diu Ortwin's swester* (*Gud.* 1273, 4); for Hildebrand, *der Wolfhartes oeheim* (*NL.*, MS C, 352, 5); and for Wolfhart, *Hildebrands swesterkint*

<sup>48</sup> *Bit.* 3135, 3592, 4076, 4767, 5574, 5737, 11511, 11915, 12854.

<sup>49</sup> *Rab.* 299, 4; 301; 316, 1; 320, 5; 340, 2; 372, 6; 381, 1; 401, 6; 440, 6; 981, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Lamprecht, *Deutsche Geschichte*, Berlin, 1894, I, 103.

<sup>51</sup> Timm suggests (*Das Nibelungenlied nach Darstellung und Sprache ein Urbild deutscher Poesie*, 112) that in the *Nibelungenlied* designation of a person as '—'s child' after the mother is used when the beauty of the person to be referred to is to be emphasized. But a study of the context of such passages and of usage in other epics does not justify this viewpoint.

(NL. 2248, 4). These name substitutes emphasize the relationship ties in all directions, as was necessary in the presentation of the long epics, which, it must be remembered, were originally given orally and not in writing. The all-important factor of relationship was in those days a chief motivation of action, and the identifying now after this, now after that, relative was a necessary stylistic device for keeping in mind the tangled web of relationships in the by no means simple plots. Another factor in these name substitutions is to be seen in the epic fondness for rotation or variation in designation, and a love of sonorous names. This latter predilection even grew, in the court epic, to be a vice.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to this current substitution of the mother's name for that of the person referred to, there is a tendency to lay emphasis upon the maternal parentage in giving genealogies. Sometimes the maternal parentage alone is indicated; and again, whereas we in present-day speech would almost invariably mention (1) the father and (2) the mother, it is quite common in the epics to find the latter mentioned first. Who Horant's father was in the *Gudrun* we do not know. We are told of him:

1112 sîn muoter diu was swester Hetelen des rîchen  
welt ir's im getrouwen, sô sult ir'm in dem sturme niht entwîchen.

His only further identification is through his maternal uncle. In *Biterolf und Dietleip* the stress is laid on the maternal descent from the very beginning of the narrative. We are told of our hero:

193 Dietleip alsô was er genant:  
der helt was des ungeschant,  
sîn muoter hiez frou Dietlint,  
diu was eins rîchen küneges kint;  
in erbte an êre deste baz.

<sup>52</sup> Goedeke, *Grundriss*, Hannover, 1884, 74, remarks: "Die öde Sucht an der Aufzählung solcher fremden Namen verleitet den Dichter der *Krone* die Verse 872-912 und 2291-2345 nur mit solchen abenteuerlichen Namen zu füllen und selbst Hartmann hat im *Erec* ähnliche Häufung." We find such weird names as: Liachturteltart and Brandelidelin, Schionatulander and Utepandragun, Condwiramurs and Poydiconjunz, Mylegrogram and Gazozein, Affrosydones and Quebeleplutz, Dyartorsorganant and Glakothlesflojir, Triasoltrifertrant and Galagandreiz, Pliopleherin, Hiberbortikon, Killirjacae, Karnachkarnanz, and Gurnemanz aus Tribalibot.

Again we are told of the mother:

2003                    si was frou Dietlint genant,  
                         ir dienten siben fürsten lant;  
                         dâ hiez ir sun her Dietleip.

Giving his own identity, Dietleip mentions his mother first:

4265                    mîn muoter heizet Dietlint,  
                         des alten Diethêres kint.  
                         mîn vater ist Biterolf genannt.

The mother is also mentioned before the father by other characters in the same epic:

4236                    Diether hiez iuwers anen name.  
                         iuwer muoter hiez Dietlint,  
                         ir sit daz Biterolfes kint.

In *Partonopier und Meliur* the hero is introduced in the fosterage of his maternal uncle, and is then further identified through his mother:

268                    sîn muoter daz vil reine wîp  
                         geheizen was Lucrête,  
                         diu wol gelêret hête  
                         den jungeline gebâren.

Whenever Partonopier's mind turns to his relatives, it is unfailingly of his uncle and of his mother that he thinks, never of the father (cf. 744 ff.; 2722 ff.; 2738 ff.; 2796 ff.); it is only late in the epic that the father's death makes clear that he had all the while been living. In the *Trojanischer Krieg*, of classical origin and patrilineal throughout in relationships, there is a touch of preference for the mother and her kin in Ajax' identification of himself to Hector:

37370                    "sît ich von iu gevârâget bin  
                         des künnes und der friunde mîn,  
                         sô tuon ich iu mit rede schîn  
                         die muoter, diu mich hât getragen.  
                         ich wil iu mînen namen sagen  
                         und mîn vil hôch geslehte."

Sometimes a natural explanation for this preference lies at hand in the fact of the father's death or absence. Thus when the son

is thrown in combat in the *Jüngere Hildebrandslied* and is forced to reveal his identity, it is normal that he should mention first the parent who has reared him:

- 14, 2      "ich bin ein edler degen    us Kriechenlanden stolz,  
              min muter heist fraw Ute,    ein gewaltige herzogin  
              so ist Hiltebrant der alte    der liebste vater min.

The heroine Kriemhilde in the *Nibelungenlied* is introduced through her brothers, and again it is natural that of her parents the living mother should receive first mention:

- 7, 1      Ein rîchiu kûneginne,    frau Uote ir muoter hiez  
              ir vater der hiez Dancrât,    der in diu erbe liez.

No such explanation is available, however, for the passage in the *Hurnen Seyfrid*, where the hero, who has run away from home, inquires concerning his own identity of a dwarf and is told first the name of his mother:

- 48, 2    Do sprach zû im das Zwerge    Will dir zû wissen thon  
              Deyn mûter hiess Siglinge    Und was von Adel geporn  
              Deyn vatter Kûnig Sigmund    Von den so bist du wordn.

In the *Karlmeinet* Bremund asks Karl on the battlefield who his father is. Under such circumstances it seems peculiarly significant that Karl in his reply should name his mother first:

- A 90, 14      Myn moder Berte van Vranckriche,  
              Anders wil ich wyssen werliche,  
              Dat Pippyn der konynek here  
              Myn adel vater were.

A great number of similar passages could be cited if space permitted,<sup>53</sup> showing the frequency of this practice in the epic.

Because of the prime importance of kinship in the middle ages the epics teem with passages which point out the closeness of relationship through common parentage, such as:

- NL. 1556, 3    von vater und von muoter was er der bruoder mîn.

<sup>53</sup> Similar cases are: *Ort.* 394, 4; *Parz.* XIII, 280 ff.; *J. Tit.* 5214; *Parto.* 13178 ff.; *Apol.* 19959; *Seyf.* 61, 1 ff.; *Tand.* 10722 ff.; *Eilh. Trist.* 631 ff.; *Val.* 1240; *Wigl.* 150, 30 ff.; 223, 12 ff.; *Wigm.* 893, 4148; *Wilh. Ost.* 12269 ff.; *Wilh. Wend.* 6415; *Gar.* 4199.

It is significant, however, that in these expressions the tendency predominates to trace the relationship through a common womb:

NL. 2104, 3 wand' ir sît mîne bruoder unde einer muoter kint.

Ulr. Alex. 12193 "hêrre, hân ich triuwe,  
so ist iuwer leit mîn riuwe.  
ich waen wir wesen doch ein lîp,  
sît daz uns beide brâht ein wîp."

Willh. Ost. 14106 "wir sin von ainem liben  
bechomen waerlich,  
bistu von Osterriech."

Parz. I, 184 deiswâr ich tuon iu allen schîn  
daz uns beide ein muoter truoc.

Tit. 138, 4 gedenk' daz unser beider muoter ein wîbes lîp gebaere.

We see pictured in the epics the characteristic difference in the nature of the sexes in that the father frequently appears stern towards his offspring, the mother by contrast gentle, loving, and forgiving. While the father in *Meier Helmbrecht* relentlessly drives away his blinded and crippled son whose folly he cannot forgive,

1812 im gap diu muoter doch ein brot.

and while in *St. Franciscen Leben* the father cruelly punishes his son and casts him with tied hands into a cellar, the mother loosens his bonds and frees him in the father's absence. It is the mother Heleche's love for her sons and her boundless grief at their death which is in the foreground in the *Rabenschlacht*, not the emotions of the father; and this is typical of the epics in general. So deep is the maternal love, so close is the bond of souls between the mother and her children, that the approach of danger to them brings her forebodings in dreams,<sup>54</sup> and the evil which befalls them frequently leads to her death from grief. The epics present an imposing array of mothers who die of a broken heart over the departure of their sons or over the ill that befalls them; but paternal grief never breaks a father's heart. At times we find direct comment upon the preëminence of maternal love, as when the poet says:<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Cf. below, 102 f.

<sup>55</sup> *St. Franciscen Leben*, 790.



ich waene der muoter diu kint  
lieber danne dem vater sint.

This difference in parental love is due, as stated above, to the inherent difference of the male and female natures, and continues today. Yet it is a matter not unrelated to the question of matriliney; it is precisely on this fundamental sex difference that the theory of matriliney is based, and the mother is the closer parent today for the same reason that, at a certain stage among primitive races, and largely controlled by economic conditions, she is the family head.

The sacredness of the maternal tie is to be seen in the rarity with which it is broken. In the *Willehalm*, when her own people war against Queen Gyburg because of her elopement, and when even her father has determined upon her death, her son alone, "*Gyburge barn*," refuses to take up arms against her. As the *Krone* asserts:

22353                   Ouch enwizzen diu kint leben  
Nâch der muoter von triuwen:  
Dar an kan sie niuwen  
Rehter natûre art,  
Daz selten ie verkêrt wart,  
Ez enwaer bî schaden hôchvart.

We have noted but a single case of the violation of this tie, and that in an epic of late date, *Mai und Beaflo*r. Under the strongest provocation Mai slays his mother. Though the justice of the deed is recognized by his followers, the son cannot cast its crushing weight from his conscience:

175, 2                   "vervluochet sî diu stunde,"  
sprach er, "in der ich wart geborn!  
ich hân nû sêle und lîp verlorn.  
ich mac wol von schulden klagen,  
daz die mîn hant hat erslagen  
diu mich truog und mich gebar."

Various other evidence, less direct and conscious but for that reason none the less reliable, points to the primacy of the maternal parent in the popular mind. There are, for instance, the constantly recurring medieval expressions *muoter barn*, *muoter*

*kint*, comparable to the English phrase, "every mother's son of you," and the modern German expressions: *keine Mutterseele*, *kein Mutterkind*, *kein Muttermensch*. The popularity of such phrases as:

*Roth*. 761                      er was der aller künisten eine  
                                      der ie môtirbarn gehiez.

or

*NL*. 19, 4    durch sîn eines sterben starb vil maneger muoter kint.

is attested by the occurrence of twenty such passages in a single epic (*Troj. K.*). There are, of course, many cases where noble rank is indicated through paternal titles, such as: *küniges kint*. But these are in no way parallel to *muoter kint*, inasmuch as such phrases as the former are used solely to indicate rank and do not stress the paternal bond.

Because of the sacredness of the filial tie to the mother, she was sometimes sworn by; Alexander (*Alex. Str.* 3761), "*swôr bî sîner mûter heile*." Of similar significance is the fact that while countless passages sing the praise of the mother who has given birth to a hero, there is not one passage that gives credit to the father:

*Roth*. 4701                      dîn môdir mûze sâlich sîn  
                                      daz si dich ie getrûc.

*Ulr. Alex.* 3444                wol dem wîbe, die in gebar!

*J. Tit.* 2714, 1    O wol gescheh dem wibe, die dise frucht ie brehte!

By the same token the qualities of the son may reflect unfavorably upon the mother:

*Ulr. Alex.* 7055                wie torstest du, boeses wîbes suon,  
                                      solich untriwe gegen mir tuon?

*Liet. v. T.* 2025                Ir muter sun von schalkes art!

and a slur upon a person's mother was the sharpest form of scurrilous attack.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Speaking of the characteristics of matriliney among primitive peoples, Post (*Ethn. Juris.*, I, 71 ff.) says: "So findet sich häufig eine ausserordentliche Hochachtung für die Mutter im Gegensatz zum Vater, was sich namentlich auch darin äussert, dass eine Beleidigung der Mutter als besonders schwer gilt." Herein is to be found the explanation of a phe-

Another expression with a matrilineal background comes to light in the *Karlmeinet*:

176, 15                      Want Orias quam zo hant  
All moder leyne gerant.

and in *Peter Diemringer*:

285                      vil schier da uf dem steine  
die schoen saz muotereine. (Cf. 222, 469.)

Here the effect of the word *mutter* is intensive, as in similar expressions *mutterbloss*, *mutternackt*, etc. *Mutterallein*, or *mutterseelenallein*, really means: all alone but for the ever-present spirit of the mother.<sup>57</sup>

In many other ways the German language reflects the matrilineal influence that has been so potent in its moulding. One need only mention the extensive number of words compounded with *Mutter*, such as *Mutterhabe*, *Mutterwitz*, *Mutterdeutsch*, *Muttersprache*, *Muttererde*, *Mutterkirche*, *Muttermal*, etc. Commenting upon the word *künne* (Got. *kuni*, Gr. γένος, Lat. *gens*), Engels<sup>58</sup> maintains that the connection of this word with the root found in Gr. γυνή Slav. *zenâ*, Got. *quino*, Norse *kona*, Eng. *queen*, leads us back to the matrilineal period. Müller-Lyer<sup>59</sup> calls attention to the word *Gelichter* (derived from O. H. G. *lehtar*, *gilehtar*, 'womb'), meaning 'all those springing from the same womb.' Coming to mean relationship in general, the word has now faded to the meaning 'of the same (low) kind, same sort.'<sup>60</sup> It may also be stated that all Indo-European words meaning to beget referred first to the functioning of the mother, and only later came to be used with reference to the part played by the father.

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nomenon common to many, if not all, languages, upon which Grimm (*Ra.*, II, 205 f.) comments, but for which he offers no explanation, namely: that the coarsest and most insulting epithets contain a reflection upon a person's mother, never upon the father. We need only recall the epithet "son of a —."

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Lippert, *Geschichte der Familie*, Stuttgart, 1884, 58.

<sup>58</sup> *Origin of Fam.*, Chicago, 1905, 163.

<sup>59</sup> *Die Familie*, München, 1912, 183.

<sup>60</sup> Paul: *Wörterbuch*, 2. Aufl., 200.

From one standpoint or another various authors<sup>61</sup> have commented on other German words which are matrilineal in their conception. Such words are *Brautschaft*, *Bräutigam*, *Geschwister* (instead of the patrilineal word *Gebrüder*), *Geschwisterkinder*, *Brautpaar*, and the compounds *Schwiegervater*, *Schwiegersohn* (where the feminine *Schwieger* is used rather than the masculine *Schwäher*). It is a striking fact, however, that while we speak of our 'mother tongue' and the German of his *Muttersprache*, and while we also speak of our 'mother country,' the German on the other hand usually speaks of his *Vaterland*. The word *Mutterland*, used in German in the sense of the parent land over against colonies, is not, however, entirely unknown in the same sense in which *Vaterland* is used.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, the patrilineal word *Vaterland* has the preference in modern German usage. The writer believes, however, that this may be easily explained. The earliest use of the word does not antedate the Middle High German period. Examples are as follows:

*Eilh. Trist.* 5621      "ich bin geheizzen Tristrant,  
Lochnois ist mines vatir lant  
und ich bin Markes swestir barn."

In the *Partonopier*, in which the royal father is all but entirely ignored and where the hero's sole thought in connection with homecoming is of his mother and maternal uncle, we are nevertheless told that:

2722                      ûf sînes werden vater lant  
wart sîn herze dô verdaht.

Simply because the ownership of property, and the descent of the same through inheritance, had passed completely into the

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Müller-Leyer, *Die Fam.*, 183; Weise, *Muttersprache*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1907, 48; and the various dictionaries.

<sup>62</sup> Thus Kant (10, 83) speaks of "die Angemessenheit der Menschen zu ihren Mutterländern." Wieland says (27, 40): "Ich bin zwar im Begriff eine kleine Reise in unser altes Mutterland zu machen." Goethe writes (32, 103): "Das mannichfaltige Bedeutende, das ich vor einem Jahr im eigentlichen Mutterlande gesehen, erlebt und gedacht hatte." Similar usage occurs with other good authors, such as Bürger, Herder, and Uhland. Cf. Grimm, *Wörterbuch*, s. v. *Mutter*.

hands of the men long before the Middle High German period, the words *Land*, *Stadt*, became associated with the father rather than with the mother.<sup>63</sup>

As might be expected, many proverbs preserve to the present day an emphasis upon the maternal relation.<sup>64</sup> The fact that *die Sonne* is feminine in German while *der Mond* is masculine may be a further bit of linguistic evidence. In the classical languages the genders are reversed. Although there is much force in the current explanation that these genders are due to climatic conditions, it is suggested that religious and, primarily, sociological conditions offer a more immediate and satisfactory explanation. To primitive peoples the sun and moon are deities. Reflection of the prominence of the female in the social structure of matrilineal societies has usually been observed in their religious practices and theogony. We may have to do here with the same matrilineal influence which has left so many other imprints upon the German language and literature. The occasional occurrence of the word for sun as masculine in Germanic is explainable on the basis of analogy.

#### POSITION OF THE TEUTON WOMAN

The prominence of the female in early theogony and mythology, in religion, and in medicine, may rest in part upon her faculty of intuition; it seems probable, however, that it stands in some relation to her position in the primitive family. There is no hard and fast causal relation between matriliney and the position occupied by woman in a society. Matriliney, however, undoubtedly tends to enhance the position of woman, and in

<sup>63</sup> Dargun (*Mutterrecht*, 58, N. 4) quotes Bonifacius and Clement to show that the expression *Mutterland* is far older than *Vaterland*.

<sup>64</sup> Such for instance as: "Keine Mutter trägt einen Bastard," "Was der Mutter ans Herz geht, das geht dem Vater nur an die Kniee," and in English: "Necessity is the mother of invention." In popular speech both in English (Pearson, *op. cit.*, II, 27) and in German (Luther, 5, 40 b; 300 a; 8, 179 a; cf. Schuppius, 113; Pistorius, *thes. par.* 4, 12) reference is made to a mother of the devil, or the devil's grandmother, while a paternal genealogy is never supplied.



certain known cases she has attained an elevated place in family and even in tribal life. Although it by no means follows that her occupancy of a high position is an indication of contemporary or prior matrilineal conditions, it may have some weight as contributory evidence.

Schiller's words, "*Ehret die Frauen*," seem like an echo from the distant past of the Germanic race. Whatever significance may be attached to the fact, it is noticeable of the early Teutons, as compared with other Indo-European races, that woman occupies in some respects a place of peculiar prominence. Strabo describes the hoary-headed priestesses of the Cimbri, who slew the prisoners taken in warfare, and prophesied the outcome of battle from the flow of blood and from the entrails of the victims.<sup>65</sup> This report is confirmed and enlarged upon by Tacitus, who tells us that the Teutons heeded the counsels of their females; that they regarded them as endowed with the gift of prophecy, and made priestesses and even divinities of them.<sup>66</sup> He further recounts that the women accompanied the men on their warring expeditions, encouraged them in battle by their cries, and even upon occasion engaged in the combat themselves.<sup>67</sup>

These Amazonian activities which the historians have recorded remind us of the *Idisi* and *Walküren* of early Germanic literature. Brünhilde of the *Nibelungenlied* is evidently one of these. It is only by the help of Sifrit and his *Tarnkappe* that the redoubtable Gunther is able to defeat her in various contests; and on her wedding night she checks her husband's unwelcome advances by hanging him upon a peg on the wall. Hilde, the instigator of the expedition of revenge in the *Gudrun*, is also originally a *Walküre* with a wild and unquenchable thirst for warfare, who has been toned down to human proportions.<sup>68</sup> Similar traces of primitive wildness are discernible in Frau Bride

<sup>65</sup> *Strabonis Geographica*, Bk. G, chap. 2, 403.

<sup>66</sup> Tacitus: *Hist.*, IV, 61, 65.

<sup>67</sup> E.g., the defeat of the Cimbri by Marius (Tacitus, *Germania*, c. 7-8); and the leading of the Cheruskian army by Thusnelda (Strabo, *Geog.*, I, 446).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Symons: *Heldensage*, in Paul: *Grundriss*, 1. Aufl., II, 52.

in *Orendel*. Shattering against the wall the sword with which her chamberlain tries to deceive her, so that it breaks into fragments:

1611        si sluog im daz ein über sinen rücken,  
              si nam in bī dem hāre,  
              si drat in under die fūeze zwāre. (Cf. 2439 ff.)

When Orendel is hard pressed in battle, she comes to his assistance in most Amazonian fashion, cutting a wide swath through the pagan army, and striking a heathen rider from his horse in order to provide the hero with a mount (2055 ff.; cf. 3832 ff.).<sup>69</sup>

Something of the divine and omniscient lingers in the characters of the swan-maiden type which are found in early Germanic literature. A well-known illustration occurs in the *Nibelungenlied*. When the Burgundians have reached the Donau on their fatal trip to Etzel, and Hagan is seeking a ferryman, he comes upon several swan-maidens bathing in the water. By stealing their garments he forces them to foretell the outcome of the Burgundian expedition (1533 ff.). The swan-maiden occurs again in the *Gudrun*, but christianized into an angel appearing in the guise of a bird, to tell Gudrun of her approaching deliverance. It is doubtless a trace of this same motif which comes to light in the epics *Lohengrin* and the *Schwanritter*, where a swan brings the hero to the rescue of the oppressed maiden. Although the swan's clothing is laid aside in the later epics, *wīsiu wip* still possess miraculous powers of healing (e.g., *diu wīse Isolde* and her mother in *Tristan*<sup>70</sup>) and of prophecy. In the *Nibelungenlied* Kriemhilde has forebodings of her coming

<sup>69</sup> Lippert (*Kulturgesch.*, Stuttgart, 1886-7, II, 68) thus describes the prominence of woman in the North Germanic Saga: "Es ist ein interessanter Zug der nordischen Sage, dass sie sich gern mit Frauen beschäftigt, welche durch das sieghafte Festhalten an ihrer Hoheitsstellung volkstümlich geworden waren. Thorborg, welche zu Pferde den Bauern den gefangenen Grotter abjagte (Gretters Saga), Sigrid Storråda, Ingeborg, Ragevalds Frau Asta, die Mutter des Olof Digre, waren im Norden Muster, aber nicht die einzigen Hausfrauen dieses Schlages. Die Sagen erzählen vielfach von im öffentlichen Leben bedeutenden Männern, dass sie daheim unter Frauenregiment stünden, und der Isländer Thorhaller (Thord Hraedes Saga) betonte, dass das in seinem Hause so gebräuchlich wäre."

<sup>70</sup> *Gottfr. Trist.*, 7789, 10288. Cf. Chadwick, *op. cit.*, 339 ff.; Klemm, *Allgem. Kulturgesch.*, Leipzig, 1847, IX, 33 ff.

disaster in a dream which her mother, Frau Uote, interprets (NL 13, 1 ff.). In the *Ruodlieb* the mother's dream symbolizes the son's later victory in a combat by which he wins a beautiful princess and with her a realm. In the *Herzog Ernst* (D, CLXXI) the mother has knowledge of her son's distress through dreams; and in the *Rabenschlacht* Heleche has a premonition in a dream of the coming death of her sons.

Some of the later German narrative poems which bear certain earmarks of folk poesy contain brides of the swan-maiden type. It is typical of these female characters that they possess miraculous powers by which they are able to change their forms, remain invisible, etc., etc. They dominate the marriage relation, and lay restrictions or taboos upon the husband, upon the disregarding of which they break the marriage union. We find such brides in *Partonopier und Meliur*, *Peter Deimringer*, and in *Friedrich von Schwaben*. In the latter epic Friedrich pursues a maiden in the form of a deer, and reaches her palace in the woods at night. His union with her is under strict conditions: if he sees her, he must lose an eye and she will fly away as a dove. The union is broken when the hero strikes a light at night to behold her, and it is only after long travail that he is able to rejoin his lost love. Seyfried's main love adventure, in the *Seyfried de Ardemont*, is with Mundirosa, a bride of the same type. When he breaks the restriction which she places upon him, she takes leave of him. Seyfried swears that he will search the whole world for her, and finally succeeds in accomplishing their reunion. In *Gauriel von Muntabel*, Gauriel may not mention to others his beloved, the Queen of Fluratrone, with whom he lives periodically in matrilocal marriage. The breaking of this restriction results in his disfigurement and her disappearance. With the greatest difficulty he accomplishes their reunion. The significant thing in these cases is not only the miraculous power attributed to the female but her dominance of the marriage union in the imposing of taboos upon the husband and in terminating the union upon her own pleasure. This reminds one of female dominance of the marriage relationship in modern matrilineal socie-

ties. Among the Pueblo Indians, for instance, the husband who has aroused his wife's dissatisfaction understands well enough what it means when he finds his personal belongings done up in his blanket and placed before the door of the dwelling—a hint which he does not fail to heed.<sup>71</sup>

It is common knowledge that Christianity has lowered the position of the Teuton woman. In the female characteristics which had seemed divine to the old Teutons the Christian church saw only the demoniacal; and at the touch of the missionaries the priestesses of the gods and goddesses became creatures of the devil—the holy and wise women became witches.<sup>72</sup> The Church was the implacable foe of the old heathen viewpoints; what it could not suppress it transformed by the grafting of Christian ideas on to the old roots. Local mother goddesses were converted into local saints, as for instance Walpurg, known at once as saint and as presiding mother of the witches which hold high carnival in the *Walpurgisnacht*, as pictured in Goethe's *Faust*. And the Virgin Mary herself takes the place in innumerable ways of the old mother goddess of fertility.<sup>73</sup> This leads us to understand what would otherwise appear as a strange and unnatural phenomenon in early German literature: the *Marienkult*. It is nothing more nor less than a cyclic recurrence of the matrilineal tendency which accompanied the development of chivalry. In the worship and veneration of the Virgin Mary, and in the *Minnedienst* of knighthood, the earlier pagan ideas of womanhood found perpetuation.

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<sup>71</sup> Stuart-Glennie, in his *Origins of Matriarchy*, in: *The Women of Turkey and their Folklore*, London, 1890-1, Sec. III, 583), gives an interesting characterization of the swan-maiden type of bride which is so common in folk poesy.

<sup>72</sup> The etymology of the word 'witch' is in itself instructive; it is related to Low Ger. *wikken*, to predict, and may possibly be identical with Anglo-Saxon *witisa*, soothsayer, from the verb 'to wit,' Ger. *wissen*.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Pearson, *op. cit.*, II, 33 ff.; Bernhöft, *Frauenleben in der Vorzeit*, Wismar, 1893, 48 ff.



## II. UNCLE AND NEPHEW

Of all blood relationships that of the uncle and his nephew is the most prominent in the medieval German epic and the most glorified. The uncle is usually related on the maternal side, the nephew being identified in an overwhelming number of cases as the sister's son. With the mother's kindred as the background, it is quite the rule to find the uncle and nephew usurping the central place in the dramatic interest of the epic.

In order to realize fully the prominence of the uncle-nephew motif in the various plots it is really necessary to read the epics in their entirety from this particular viewpoint. Although the very abundance and extent of the material make a full presentation impossible here, the following pages nevertheless attempt to give a general idea of its character and volume in a brief review of the extensive field of the medieval German epic.

It seems advisable, in tracing this motif, to consider first the epics of more or less purely Germanic origin, and, second, those which came into German literature through French inspiration or were subject to French influence. The chronological sequence will be adhered to as far as practicable. In this connection it must be borne in mind that the date at which the epics were written is in many cases indeterminate. Furthermore, the date of writing is by no means a gauge of the age of the elements out of which the epic, in its final written form, grew. It is apparently advisable, too, for stylistic reasons, to group together epics embodying the same legend, even if they were written in different periods.

The earliest German epics in which we find the uncle and nephew motif are written in Latin. The first of these is the *Waltharilied*, written about 930. Although the form is patterned after Virgil, the material is truly Germanic in viewpoint, in characters, and in action.



Walther, fleeing from Etzel's court with Hildegund and a large treasure, is overtaken and attacked in a narrow ravine by Gunther and his men. One by one the redoubtable hero slays his foes. When Kamalo is killed by Walther, the former's nephew Kimo endeavors to take blood-revenge. This nephew is a brother's son (686 ff.). Much more emotional content is given to the relation between Hagen and his sister's son Patafried. Hagen is a passive spectator, for he sulks because of a taunt from the King, whom he had warned against attacking Walther. Seeing his nephew preparing to take up the combat, Hagen breaks his silence to restrain him from rushing to certain death. When his appeals prove vain, bitter tears wet his lap as he thinks of the grief which is in store for his sister, Patafried's mother:

- 846     Sextus erat Patavrid. Soror hunc germana Haganonis  
           Protulit ad lucem. Quem dum prodedere vidit,  
           Vocibus et precibus conatur avunculus inde  
           Flectere proclamans: "Quonam ruis? Aspice mortem,  
           Qualiter arridet! Desiste! En ultima Parcae  
           Fila legunt. O care nepos, te mens tua fallit.  
           Desine! Waltharii tu denique viribus impar."'  
           \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*  
           Heu mihi, care nepos, quid matri, perditte mandas?  
           \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*  
           Sic ait et gremium lacrimis conspersit obortis,  
           Et "Longum, formose, vale!" singultibus edit.

When he and Gunther alone survive and he yields to the King's entreaties that he confront Walther, he justifies this violation of their long-standing friendship by declaring that that bond was broken by the slaying of his nephew and has been superseded by the duty of blood-revenge:

- 1272     "Cetera fors tulerim, si vel dolor unus abesset:  
           Unice enim carum, rutilum, blandum, pretiosum  
           Carpisti florem mucronis falce tenellum.  
           Haec res est, pactum quae destruxit prior alnum,  
           Idcircoque gazam cupio pro foedere nullam.  
           Sitne tibi soli virtus, volo discere in armis,  
           Deque tuis manibus caedem perquiro nepotis."

That he did not perform this duty more promptly exposes him to criticism even in later times; in the *Nibelungenlied* Hildebrand answers Hagen's jibes with the taunt:

2344      "nu wer was der ûfme schilde vor dem Waskensteine saz,  
             dô im von Spânje Walther sô vil der friunde sluoc?  
             ouch habt ir noch ze zeigen an iu selben genuoc."

A hundred years later than the *Waltharilied* the *Ruodlieb* was written. This poem, like the former, is foreign in language only—the content is German. On his journey home Ruodlieb meets his nephew, whom he cordially takes in charge at once, and whose marriage he furthers and supervises. It is evident from the conversation of fragment XII<sup>74</sup> that the circumstances in which Ruodlieb finds his nephew are unhappy. The uncle rescues him from this plight, supplies him with a servant and clothes, and when he asks the nephew to come along home with him the youth cries for joy:

XII, 8              Cui cor mox hylarat, pre leticia quoque flebat.

At home we catch a picture of their intimacy:

XI, 18              Rōtlied contribulis conuiua fuit socialis,  
             Ex uno pane comedunt, una quoque lance,  
             Ex uno cyato biberant communiter ambo.

Unfortunately only fragments of this poem are preserved. The inference seems justifiable that the nephew had been in the fosterage of his uncle from early childhood.<sup>75</sup>

From the earliest times the minstrel was the bearer of literary tradition, and the popular epics, which we have first to consider, are his products. The earliest of these which contain the uncle-nephew motif are the *Herzog Ernst*, *Salmân und Môrold*, and *Orendel*. There are numerous *neven* in the *König Rother* also (3332, 3432, 3440, 3583, 4203, etc.), but the exact relationships are left so undetermined as to be of no value for our purposes.

<sup>74</sup> According to Seiler; IX, according to the arrangement of Laistner, Kögel, and Heyne. Cf. Heyne's *Rudlieb*, pp. 56 ff.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Kögel's conclusion (*Gesch. d. d. Lit.*, Strassburg, 1894, I, 2. Teil, 389), "dass der Neffe ein Waisenkind ist und seinen stehenden Aufenthalt von jeher im Hause Ruodliebs gehabt hat." We have found the custom of fosterage to be a characteristic phenomenon of the uncle-nephew relationship, even when the parents of the nephew are living.

In the *Herzog Ernst* the uncle and nephew spring into great prominence. This epic deals with a Kaiser whose nephew, Heinrich, stands high in his favor:

*Ernst A*, 26                der was des keiseris neve  
ind was ellenelich sîn râtgeve.

Not only is he pointed out as the Kaiser's counselor (*Ernst B*, 652; *D*, LIV, 26), but also as his favorite (*trût*). When the Kaiser becomes fond of his stepson Ernst, the nephew's passionate jealousy is aroused:

*Ernst B*, 666            wan man in ze hove niht vernam  
sô wol also dô vorn.

Fearing that Ernst might take first place in his uncle's affections, the nephew plots to turn the Kaiser against him, and finally succeeds in engendering hostility between the two. Ernst breaks into the room where the Kaiser is holding secret conference with his nephew and slays the latter, while the former escapes into a nearby chapel. In *Ernst B* the Kaiser thus grieves over his nephew's death:

1361                    "Du riuwest mich sêre!  
ich enwil ouch nimmer mêre  
in mîme herzen werden frô,  
ich enreche dich alsô  
daz man immer dâ von sagen mac."

1378                    "Daz sol mich riuwen immer mêre  
die wîl ich den lîp hân,  
daz er ie getorste begân,  
diz laster an dem mâge mîn."

In *Ernst D*, a version differing widely from the others, Ernst taunts the fleeing Kaiser for deserting his nephew and leaving him to his death:

LVII, 35                Do Ernst tzu der tur indrang,  
Der keyser von dem wege sprang  
In eyne cappelle,  
Die tur verslos er snelle;  
Heinrich die burde eine trug,  
Ernst das heubt ym abslug:  
Damit rieff er den kaiser an,  
Es ware tzeglich getan,  
Das er so liesse sinen mag,  
Der muste liden dissien pag.

Though the versions *A* and *B* do not specify the exact meaning of *neve*, version *D* explicitly states that Heinrich is the Kaiser's *swester sun* (XXVII, 38).

In the *Orendel*, Îse, who accompanies the hero to Mindolt's castle to recover his stolen wife, recognizes a maternal uncle in the old gatekeeper, Herzog Achill. Hearing Achill's voice, the nephew exclaims:

3486

. . . . "kuss mich an mînen mund,  
ich bin dîner swester sun,  
dîner swester Elizabêt!"

Achill, seeking to obtain an escort for the two from the King, pretends that *both* of them are sons of his sister (3553 ff.), though *Orendel* is in no way related to him; his motive is evidently to present the strongest possible case for them to the King.

In the *Salman und Morolf*, when Fôre marches upon Salmân to gain possession of the latter's wife Salmê, and is defeated and captured, it is his nephew Elias who sends him the magic ring with which he gains Salmê's affection, and his own freedom. Later, after the final defeat and death of Fôre, another nephew of his, a neighboring heathen king, makes war upon Salmân in order to wreak revenge (3072 ff.).

In the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Gudrun* the product of the minstrel rises to the level of the great national epic. Although not written until about 1200, the *Nibelungenlied* reaches back in origin to a remote past, its elements being on the whole of greater antiquity than those of any of the epics already considered. The *Nibelungenlied* is replete with uncles and nephews, all of whom are related in the female line. Thus Ortwin is Dankwart's and Hagen's sister's son; he is identified through his uncles (*Hagenen swester sun*, 119, 2), and is usually in association with one or both of them (81, 3; 125, 1; 162, 1; 173, 3; 178, 1 ff.; 201, 1; 796, 1, etc.). Kriemhilde's first son (by Sîfrit) is named after his maternal uncle, Gunther. The second son (by Etzel) was to have been sent to his mother's brothers to be reared (1914 ff.) had not the tragedy at Etzel's court intervened.

It is important to notice that in each case the child was expected to take after the maternal kin rather than after the father. Of Kriemhilde's first son we are told:

- 716 Den îlte man dô toufen und gab im einen namen,  
 Gunther, nâch sînem oeheim: des dorft' er sich niht sehamen.  
 geriet' er nâch den mâgen, daz waer' im wol ergân.  
 dô zôh man in mit vlîze; daz was von sculden getân.

Etzel says of his son Ortlieb, with reference to the child's maternal uncles:

- 1915 Gevaeht er nâch dem künne, er wirt ein küene man,  
 rîch und vil edele, stâre und wol getân.

This same idea is expressed again in the *Rosengarten* (*D*, 127, 1), and in *Meleranz* (169).<sup>76</sup>

When the conquered Brünhilde is constrained to leave her land to go with Gunther to Burgundy, she turns the regency over to her uncle, her mother's brother:

- 522, 1 Dô sprach diu küneginne: "wem lâz' ich mîniu lant?  
 diu sol ê hie bestiften mîn unt iuwer hant."  
 dô sprach der künic edele: "nu heizet her gân"  
 der iu dar zuo gevalle, den sul wir voget wesen lân."

Ein ir hoehesten mâge diu vrouwe bî ir sach  
 (er was ir muoter bruoder), zuo dem diu maget sprach:  
 "nu lât iu sîn bevolhen diu bürge unt ouch diu lant.  
 unze daz hie richte des künic Guntheres hant."

Herrât, who is identified through her maternal aunt (*diu Helchen swester tochter*), is reared by the latter, and is bound to her by the deepest love (1381, 1; 1389, 4). Bishop Pilgerîn von Passau is a brother of Uote and thus maternal uncle of the Burgundian kings and of Kriemhilde. The niece and the nephews visit this uncle on their way to the land of the Huns (1296 ff.;

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Kohler's review of Wilken's book: *Het matriarchat bij de oude Arabiern*, Amsterdam, 1884, in *Z. f. vgl. R.*, VI, 421 ff.: "Von grosser Bedeutung ist vor allem der Glaube, dass der mütterliche Oheim zum Neffen in besonders naher Beziehung steht, so dass seine Eigenschaften auf den Neffen übergingen (*Matriarchat*, 30 ff.). Was ist dies anders, als der Rechtsgedanke, der noch bei den alten Germanen waltete, nach Tacitus."



1628 ff.), and the uncle sends a message to his sister's sons when the minstrels bearing Etzel's invitation pass through Passau (1427 ff.). Now Pilgerîn is an historical personage; he was bishop of Passau from 971 to 991, and he was probably injected into the Nibelungen legend by some grateful minstrel who had enjoyed his hospitality. We have thus by chance an accurate and relatively late date at which the uncle-nephew tie was still felt to be particularly close.

Sigestap is identified as "*Dietriches swester sun*" (2283, 3). The strongest bond between uncle and nephew in the *Nibelungenlied*, however, is that between Hildebrant and Wolfhart. When Hildebrant, delegated to inquire into Rüdiger's death, is on the point of going to the Burgundians unarmed, his sister's son, sensitive as to his uncle's honor and fearing that this will lead to his humiliation, severely reproaches him. The uncle, elsewhere always the best in counsel as in combat, gives heed and obeys:

2250, 1      dô garte sich der wîse durch des tumben rât.

When later Volker taunts Wolfhart until the latter cannot restrain himself, the uncle throws his arms around him to hold him back, in order that he may not incur Dietrich's displeasure and punishment; for Dietrich has enjoined his men not to fight the Burgundians. However, when Volker's final taunt, "Release the lion, Master," proves too much, and Wolfhart breaks loose and rushes forward, the uncle is still quicker, for

2274, 2      er wolde in vor im lâzen niht komen in den strît,

not, indeed, to gain the honor of being the first in the attack, but from the double motive of protecting his nephew in the fight and shielding him from Dietrich's anger for having begun the conflict against orders. In the destructive combat which now breaks out, Wolfhart and Gîselher fell each other. The greatest grief of his life befalls the uncle as he sees his nephew mortally wounded:

- 2298, 3      Hildebrant der alte Wolfharten vallen sach:  
im waen' vor sînem tôde sô rehte leide nie geschach.

Dô wâren gar erstorben die Guntheres man  
und ouch die Dietriches. Hildebrant was gegân  
dâ Wolfhart was gevallen nider in daz pluot:  
er beslôz mit armen den recken kûen' unde guot.

Er wolde'n ûzem hûse mit im tragen dan:  
er was ein teil ze swaere, er muose in ligen lân.  
dô blihte ûz dem bluote der rêwende man:  
er sach wol daz im gerne sîn neve het geholfen dan.

The last concern of the dying nephew is for the uncle's safety:

- 2301      Dô sprach der tôtwunde: "vil lieber oeheim mîn,  
ir mûgt an disen zîten mir niht frum gesîn:  
nu hûetet iuch vor Hagenen: jâ dunket es mich guot.  
er treit in sîme herzen einen grimmigen muot.

And he seeks to comfort the uncle with the thought that there is no cause to mourn his death, since he has died gloriously at the hands of a king, and has exacted the bitter tribute of a hundred lives from the enemy.

In the *Klage*, which is a continuation of the *Nibelungenlied* and probably of somewhat later origin, Bishop Pilgerîn grieves most deeply for his sister's sons (3357 ff.), and we are told that he had a Latin epic written as a monument to his nephews:

- 4295      Von Pazoue der bischof Pilgerîn  
durh liebe der neven sîn  
hiez scriben ditze maere,  
wie ez ergangen waere,  
in latinischen buochstaben. . . .

Such change in viewpoint as can be noted in the *Klage* is in the direction of a slight blurring of the earlier conception of the uncle and nephew relationship. Sigestap, who in the *Nibelungenlied* is Dietrich's sister's son, is only a cousin in the *Klage* (1494). More noticeable is the fact that, although Hildebrant mourns for his sister's son Wolfhart (1653 ff.), Dietrich's grief is far more deep and passionate, and it is a reversal of the rôles that the former should comfort the latter:

1751

Dô sprach meister Hildebrant  
 "ôwê, vil edel wigant,  
 wan lât ir iuwer klagen stân?  
 solden wir des frumen hân,  
 so klaget ich immer mêre  
 disen degen hêre:  
 er was mîner swester sun.  
 herre, irn sult es niht tuon:  
 von jâmer wendet iuvern muot.  
 klage diu ist niemen guot."

The net of relationships in the plot of the *Gudrun* is inextricably tangled, there being but scant data for determining just what they are. Horant, the nephew of King Hetel and of Wate, is sister's son to both. It is strange, then, that Wate, though he calls Hetel's son Ortwin "*neve*," never indicates his relationship to Hetel's daughter Gudrun; and stranger still is the indistinctness in the relationship between Hetel and Wate, whom we should expect to be brothers. The term *neve* is used indiscriminately between Hetel, Wate, and Fruote. There is no uncle-nephew episode in the *Gudrun* comparable to those in the epics already discussed. The most important of such relations is that between Hetel and Horant. The latter is identified after his mother and her brother, no reference being made to his father:

1112, 3

sîn muoter diu was swester Hetelen des rîchen.

Still earlier in the epic Horant is identified through his maternal brother Wate, and we are told that he received the crown of Denmark from Hetel (206). When the latter decides to send messengers to Ireland to sue for the hand of Hilde, he at once summons his sister's son Horant (216), who undertakes the mission with Wate, Fruote, Morunc, and Irolt, all of them relatives and vassals of the king. The sister's son is prominent, too, in the expedition to avenge the slaying of his uncle Hetel.

We have concise evidence of an unconsciously changing viewpoint when it is possible to compare earlier with later versions in the historical development of one and the same epic plot. The *Gudrun* affords such an opportunity. In the older version of this epic Hetel was slain by Hartmut, not, as in our version, by

Ludwig. And Hartmut was in turn killed by Horant, so that originally Hetel was avenged by his sister's son.<sup>77</sup>

We now come to the epics of the Dietrich cycle, which sink again to the level of the minstrel tone above which the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Gudrun* had raised themselves. The exact dates of these popular epics are for the most part not determined, but we know that they all belong to the 13th century.

Early among the epics of this group, and but loosely attached to them, is the *Ortnît*. In this epic, the father does not figure. The mother, who presides over the family group, is united to her son by the tie of deepest affection; and the place of highest regard and influence among the hero's male relatives is occupied by the mother's brother. From beginning to end, Ortnît's maternal uncle, King Yljas, plays a leading rôle. He tells Ortnît of a beautiful princess, whose father, King Machorel, however, beheads all her suitors. But when his nephew expresses his determination to win this very girl,

*Ort. A.* Dô sprach der künec von Rieuzen<sup>78</sup> "nu sî ez gote gekleit,  
17 daz ich dir disiu maere hiute hân geseit,  
diu nâch dînem tode dir ûf erstanden sint.  
ich widerriete ez gerne: du bist mîner swester kint."

Nevertheless the uncle agrees to help Ortnît carry out his resolve, whatever the dangers may be:

*Ort. A.* dô sprach Yljas van Riuzen "du bist mîner swester kint.  
28, 2 von rehte sol ich wâgen bî dir lîp unt leben.  
ich wil dir fûnf tûsent ritter und ouch mich selben geben."

The nephew is grateful for this loyal help. It is significant, however, that he considers it only his due:

*Ort. A.* Dô sprach der Lamparte<sup>79</sup> "du hâst in kurzer frist  
29 mir daz wol erzeiget, des du mir schuldic bist.  
getriuwer friunde hilfe diu ist vil wûnnelîch,  
und sent mich got her widere, ich mære dir dîn künierîch."

<sup>77</sup> "Der ganze Sagenstoff," says Hartung (*op. cit.*, 18), "ist von einem Überarbeiter . . . umgestaltet worden. Er konnte dabei um so leichter das alte zum Teil durch die Blutrache wohl begründete Verhältnis der Kämpfenden zerreißen, als diese zu seiner Zeit nicht mehr die Bedeutung hatte, wie bei der Entstehung der Sage. Immerhin ist jenes aber noch öfters im heutigen Texte deutlich erkennbar."

<sup>78</sup> Ylias.

<sup>79</sup> Ortnît.

Ortnît formally chooses his uncle as chief advisor and calls him father, although his real father is alive:

*Ort. A*, "Oeheim unde hêrre," sprach der kûnec Yljas  
54 "sint du von starkem guote die grôzen kraft hâs  
und ouch sô rîche wirde, nu kius dir einen man,  
der dir gerâten kunne: an wen wilt du dich lân?"

Dô sprach der Lamparte "ich bin dîner swester kint.  
sît daz die fürsten alle in unserm gwalte sint  
ich wil dich ze vater kiesen: du bist der vater mîn.  
diu liute und ouch mich selben enphilhe ich ûf die triuwe dîn."

At the storming of King Machorel's citadel Ortnît asks his uncle to carry the banner, on the ground that it was not fitting for any one else to do so (*Ort. A*, 296 ff.; *Ort. C*, 309 ff.). In the following battle uncle and nephew fight side by side. During a temporary absence of Ortnît, Yljas is wounded and left lying for dead. Ortnît returns in haste and nurses him back to health. When he offers to relieve him of the banner by carrying it himself, Yljas insists upon retaining it, and they fight on together. When, shortly after, Ortnît, by a clever ruse, gains possession of his beloved princess and carries her off in flight, he is overtaken by the pursuing heathen, and has to fight them single-handed. He is in sore straits when at last his uncle appears on the scene; Ortnît, exhausted from the unequal combat, hands to him his marvelous sword Rosen and with it Yljas puts the heathen to flight.

The *Biterolf und Dietleip* also comes early among the epics of the Dietrich cycle, and in it the uncle-nephew motif is given great prominence. Having surreptitiously left his wife and his home to go to Etzel's court, the father, Biterolf, encounters his sister's son Walther. Neither recognizes the other, and when Walther denies the uncle passage through his land, a combat ensues. Fortunately the uncle recognizes his nephew before harm is done, and both rejoice at the happy issue. All that day and night the two talk with each other, and daybreak finds them lying side by side, still conversing while the others sleep. Biterolf cannot yield to his nephew's urgent desire that he remain for a longer visit; in departing, he charges his nephew to watch over



his wife, his men, and his land during his absence (787 ff.). We are told repeatedly that Walther faithfully performs this charge (806; 2100 ff.; 2168 ff.); and the deserted wife feels that in Biterolf's nephew she has a firm support (2106).

Through an unusual chance, Walther again becomes arrayed against his uncle. On his way to find his absent father, Dietleip, Biterolf's son, is insulted by Gunther, and later he returns, supported by an army of relatives, to take revenge. As a means of strengthening his forces Gunther invites a large number of guests to a festival, among them Walther; after they have partaken of his bread and wine Gunther calls upon them for help against the enemy. Under the obligation of accepted hospitality Walther offers the services of himself and his men.

To Dietleip and Biterolf the bonds of kinship seem badly wrenched when they see the latter's nephew in the hostile ranks of the approaching Burgundians. Biterolf exclaims:

9924                    "sîn muoter was diu swester mîn,  
                         wie sich daz verkêret hât  
                         daz er nu Gunthêre gestât!"

Biterolf sends a message of regret and complaint that Walther "*die verchshippe lât*," and the messenger brings back from the latter an explanation of the circumstances and a declaration of loyalty to his uncle and cousin, to whom he proposes that they avoid each other in the combat (9967 ff.).

While Biterolf and Walther remain at heart faithful to kin duty, we find in Witige and Nantwîn the unusual spectacle of an uncle and sister's son in genuine hostility, Witige in Dietleip's camp, Nantwîn with Gunther. That it is a feud of long standing between the two we learn from a reference to Witige's past inability to overcome Nantwîn (7718 ff.). In Gunther's council the unnatural sister's son says:

6582                    nu ist ez an die zîte komen  
                         daz wir fûllen unser schrîn;  
                         wan Witege der oeheim mîn  
                         mit mir doch strîtet umb daz lant.  
                         kume ich in sîn wîegewant,  
                         ich füere immer desten baz." (Cf. 8520 ff.)

His disloyal attitude provokes pointed comment from Rüediger:

6591               “friunt sol friunde bî gestân,  
                     mir ist lieb daz ich niht hân  
                     friunt, als ich iuch hoere jehen,  
                     die wider mîn willen wolden sehen  
                     in ir gewalt mîn sarwât:  
                     der neven hân ich gerne rât.”

This keen thrust of sarcasm from his own comrade in arms evokes a general laugh at Nantwîn's expense (6597 ff.).

Hildebrant and his nephew Wolfhart bear the usual intimate relationship to each other in this epic. We first find the uncle gently chiding Wolfhart for taking too lightly the approaching battle against Gunther (7285 ff.). Hildebrant has assigned a special opponent to every one, excepting only his beloved nephew, whom he desires to shield. Wolfhart demands to know whom he is to oppose; and when he is detailed to fight Gêre, he objects vociferously to the attempt to spare him through assignment to fight a man of no known prowess.

Noticing that Dietrich, who is to oppose Sîfrit, shows signs of fear, Wolfhart confidentially tells his uncle (7788 ff.). Hildebrant leads Dietrich away for a private lesson. Wolfhart, concerned about his uncle and determined to be on hand if needed, rides after them and watches them from a distance. Hildebrant cures Dietrich of his passing faint-heartedness by forcing him into combat and thus warming his blood; but fearing Dietrich's displeasure against Wolfhart, he refuses to reveal the source of his information until the King promises to bear no ill will in the matter (7940 ff.).

Hildebrant's love for his sister's son appears still more strikingly when the latter is captured by Stutofuhs in the tournament with the Burgundians. Hildebrant is disconsolate (8878 ff.), and bears the news to Dietrich, who tries to comfort him; but he is determined that his nephew shall be rescued:

9002               swie alter mir turnieren wert  
                     doch muoz ich zuo zin dar in:  
                     ich hilfe mînem neven hin  
                     mit bûrgen ode mit ritterschaft!

He urges that the peace which each side has agreed to preserve during the tournament be annulled, and his insistence prevails. In the ensuing battle he breaks through the ranks of the combatants, and points out his nephew's captor to Dietrich, who succeeds in slaying him.

9278                                dô was liebe genuoc  
                                      geschehen Hildebrande:  
                                      in dûhte wie sîn ande  
                                      gar gerochen waere.

Wolfhart, witnessing the fight, finally knocks down his guard and makes good his escape with the timely assistance of another uncle, Wolfwîn (9355 ff.). Hildebrant chides Wolfhart for his excessive zeal, admonishes him against a recurrence of his defeat, and remains shoulder to shoulder with him throughout the remainder of the fighting. He succeeds in recovering the wonderful sword which the enemy had wrested from Heime's hand, and he gives it to his nephew, denying Heime's request for its return. But when the latter casts a slur on Hildebrant by the remark, "If I had the sword there would be less talk," Wolfhart flares up, and requests his uncle to return the sword to Heime, with whom he offers to fight (12903 ff.). Hildebrant, however, is obdurate.

A less important sister's son in this same epic is Boppe, repeatedly identified as "*Herbortes swesterkint*," and constantly associated with his uncle.<sup>80</sup>

The only blood relationship pointed out in the *Laurîn und Walberân* is that between the two heroes mentioned in the title. They address each other reciprocally as *oheim*, and there is no further specification of their kinship;<sup>81</sup> but it seems apparent that we have here again the traditional uncle-nephew relation, and in it the whole plot centers. When Laurîn is defeated and captured by Dietrich, word is sent at once to Laurîn's uncle, Walberân, the powerful dwarf-king in Armenia. He is greatly distressed when he receives this bad news and immediately assembles an

<sup>80</sup> 6511 ff.; 7711 ff.; 9443 ff.; 10200 ff.; 11210 ff.; 11960 ff.

<sup>81</sup> Walberân = Laurîn's *oheim*: 59, 327, 421, 622, 627, 636, 661, 694, 1136, 1142, 1149, 1152; Laurîn = Walberân's *oheim*: 223, 482, 608, 648.

army to liberate and avenge the captive nephew (II, 67 ff.). In the meantime Laurîn and Dietrich have become fast friends and have sworn brotherhood. When Walberân's messenger arrives to announce his approach, Laurîn sends back a request that his uncle refrain from any harm to the country until he has arrived at Dietrich's capital, Bern (II, 419 ff.). Walberân at once agrees, and when he reaches the gates of Bern, an affectionate meeting between uncle and nephew takes place (II, 601 ff.). Laurîn thanks his uncle for the loyalty which led him to bring his army overseas to his rescue, expresses his undying gratitude, and asks his uncle to grant him a single request (II, 611 ff.). To this the uncle replies:

II, 639

. . . . "dîn trüebesal  
 wil ich wenden über al,  
 als ich von rehte tuon sol.  
 dar umb gehabe dich wol;  
 dar umbe bin ich ûz kumen.  
 ez kum ze schaden oder ze frumen,  
 ich wende dir al dîne nôt  
 oder ich lige dar umbe tôt.  
 des soltu ouch gewert sîn,  
 swes du gerst, lieber oeheim mîn."

Thereupon Laurîn relates what has happened and asks his uncle to extend friendship likewise to Dietrich (II, 649 ff.). Walberân is unpleasantly surprised, but finally yields, and offers knightly contests to the men of Bern under terms of peace. Nevertheless, so deep-seated is his resentment toward Dietrich that when he sees him, he forgets his promise, calls for his lance, and pushes the combat so bitterly that Hildebrant becomes alarmed for the safety of his king, and appeals to Laurîn to intervene. Instructing Hildebrant to do likewise with Dietrich, Laurîn throws his arms around his uncle, and reminds him of his promise; Walberân relents and a complete reconciliation takes place, Dietrich and Walberân becoming fast friends.

The epic *Alphart's Tod*, which has for its theme the war made upon Dietrich by Kaiser Ermenrîch, distinguishes throughout between the paternal uncle (*veter*) and the maternal uncle (*oheim*). The paternal uncle, Ermenrîch, determines to force

Dietrich to surrender his land to him and take it in fief, and upon the nephew's refusal, resorts to war. The Kaiser's counsellor, Heime, urges in vain that such action toward one thus related is unnatural.

The hero, Alphart, is reared and cared for by his maternal uncle Hildebrant, his father being nowhere mentioned. Their relation is most affectionate, the uncle watching over the nephew with a father's solicitude. When Alphart volunteers to take the dangerous post of a picket against Ermenrich's hostile army, uncle and aunt do their utmost to restrain him from the undertaking, which, as it turns out, is to cost him his life. When, however, all efforts have failed and Frau Uote has tearfully dressed the nephew in his armor with her own hands, the uncle, unable to reconcile himself with Alphart's certain loss, resolves upon a dangerous plan: disguising himself, he overtakes his nephew with the intention of defeating him and sending him home to safety. But in the ensuing combat he himself suffers defeat; and when he asserts his relationship Alphart takes this for a ruse, until the removal of Hildebrant's helmet establishes his identity. Thereupon Alphart chides him for having attempted such an expedient, and the thwarted uncle returns home in sorrow. Unfortunately a gap of eleven pages in the manuscript (23-34) deprives us of an important part of our material in this case—the effect of the news of Alphart's treacherous slaying upon his relatives. The first indication of what has transpired is found when Hildebrant and Nitger, another nephew (333, 1), are seen riding together to ask help for Dietrich. That they come from battle is indicated by the word *sturmmüede* (309, 4). Hildebrant watches over still another nephew, Wolfhart, throughout the great battle in which Ermenrich is defeated (331 ff.). He keeps near him (429, 1), presses after him, and precedes him into the conflict for the purpose of protecting him;<sup>82</sup> and when Wolfhart loses his horse and is hard pressed, the uncle rescues him, catches a new mount, and helps him to safety (439-443).

<sup>82</sup> As in *NL*. 2274, 3, and *Bit*. 10647.



Hildebrant's brother, the monk Ilsam, is shown mourning at the grave of his dead nephew Alphart. Though he has rendered important assistance in the battle against Ermenrîch, he is nevertheless forced to hide, for he has killed Dietrich's uncle and has thereby incurred his bitter enmity. It is only with the greatest difficulty that Dietrich is finally led to extend forgiveness (405-408).

In *Dietrich's Flucht* we read again of the relentless and cruel warfare which Ermrîch wages upon his nephew Dietrich. Ermrîch is only a paternal uncle, however, and is represented as a monster of greed, faithlessness, and tyranny (2414), who not only kills his brother Dietrich's sons (2467 ff.), but leaves his own son to die (2462 ff.). Although no sister's sons occur in this epic, we find an aunt, Helche, providing for the marriage of her niece, a sister's daughter, and increasing her dowry by the gift of an entire province (7551 ff.).

In the *Rabenschlacht* Dietrich leaves the dead bodies of his brother and his two charges, Etzel's sons, for a grim pursuit of the slayer, Witige. The latter is accompanied by his sister's son, Rienolt. Although his subsequent conduct flatly belies his words, the uncle professes to have fear only for his nephew's safety (931 ff.). Loudly calling to the fleeing pair, Dietrich appeals to their manhood to stop and give battle, pointing out to them that they are two to one. The nephew urges the uncle to stand with him and accept the challenge, but the frightened and cowardly Witige refuses; and when Rienolt declares that then he will fight Deitrich single-handed, we have the rare and shameful spectacle of an uncle leaving his sister's son to his fate (943 ff.). Reinolt is quickly slain by Dietrich, who loses no time in the pursuit of Witige. As the bitterest taunt of all, Dietrich calls after the fleeing uncle, in the hope of checking his flight:

557

“Helt, waere dir nû leide,  
 sô raechestû die nôt.  
 Reinolt ûf der heide  
 lît von mînen handen tôt.  
 bistû ein recke küene und maere,  
 sô richestû in” sprach der Bernaere.

Witige's desertion of his sister's son greatly heightens the impression of Dietrich's terribly implacable vindictiveness, and is the best possible evidence of the abject terror with which Witige avoids his grim pursuer, in a flight which even the sea does not stop; for he plunges into the waves, where he is received by an ancestress, the mermaid Wâchilt (964).

In the various versions of the *Rosengarten*, another of the popular epics of the Dietrich cycle, Hildebrant and his sister's sons once again become conspicuous. The nephews, we are told (*Ros. D*, 127), resemble their uncle. Hildebrant appears constantly as the mentor of his nephew Wolfhart, praising or correcting him (*Ros. A*, 182, 345), and stirring him to victory in combat (*Ros. A*, 198 ff.), but always concealing his affection under rough words. When Wolfhart defeats Hagen and, flushed with victory, wants to fight on, the uncle leads him by the arm from further danger. When Dietrich refuses to fight Sifrid, and Wolfhart, seeing his uncle's tears of vexation, offers to face Sifrid himself, the uncle refuses to permit the unequal contest, but asks the nephew's assistance in case he should himself get into trouble in attempting to rouse Dietrich's fighting spirit (*Ros. D*<sup>1</sup>, XVIII, 13, 1). It is further noteworthy that when Dietrich sends his brother to secure help, he directs him to ask Gotelind for her sister's son (*Ros. D*, 87 ff.).

Comparison of the various versions of this epic in chronological order shows an increasing prominence of the father. In *Ros. A* the father of Hildebrant's nephews is not mentioned at all; in the later *Ros. D* his name is Amelolt, and he specially commends his sons to their uncle's care as they depart for the adventure in the *Rosengarten*, while he himself stays behind to guard the homeland:

*Ros D*, 81, 4 "Sô enphilhe ich dir wider die lieben süne mîn,  
Wolfhart und Sigestap, dîner swester kint.  
du wizzest, lieber bruoder, daz sie mir lieb sint."

There is also an increasing irregularity in the use of relationship terms; for whereas the terms *neve* and *oheim* are used in *Ros. A* and *D*, in the later versions *D*<sup>1</sup> and *F* both uncle and

sister's sons are called *veter*. And in *Ros. D* and *D<sup>1</sup>* Volker is identified in the impossible relationship of Kriemhilde's *swester-sun* (45, 2).<sup>83</sup>

The *Virginal* stands out both for its confused and inconsistent use of relationship terms, and for unusual prominence of the paternal uncle and the brother's son.<sup>84</sup> Hildebrant and Wolfhart, however, traditionally maternal uncle and nephew, likewise figure in the *Virginal*. Their chaffing of each other at times degenerates into quarrel, but on the whole their gruffness ill conceals their love (898; 983 ff.).

Less prominence is given to the uncle-nephew motif in the epics *Sigenot* and *Wolfdietrich*. In the *Sigenot*, the giant of that name is impelled by a burning desire to avenge the death of his nephew Grînen at the hand of Dietrich (3, 1; 6, 6; 11, 7 ff.). In *Wolfd. A* the uncle, Hugdietrich, an utterly unscrupulous character, who orders his son killed and then accuses his tool, is hostile also toward his sister's son (6 ff.). In *Wolfd. B* the giant Helle wants to kill Wolfdietrich for the slaying of his *neve* Boumgarten (488 ff.). In *Wolfd. D* two other sister's sons appear. One of these Delfiân, nephew of King Merziân, is killed by Wolfdietrich in a battle with the Saracens near Jerusalem, and the uncle leaves no stone unturned to accomplish revenge. The other is a nephew who accompanies and assists the *Burggraf* when the latter, later on in the epic (VIII, 288 ff.), attacks Wolfdietrich.

Having considered the popular epic, we now turn to the court epic, the product of chivalry. The court epics were written within the 12th and 13th centuries. Just as in the social life of this period, so also in poetry, France was the model and source of inspiration for Germany. Thus it is that the German epic of chivalry rests directly upon French literature, irrespective of whether the material is of antique, oriental, or British-Celtic origin. Sometimes we have to do with a more or less faithful

<sup>83</sup> The editor, Holz, comments on this passage as follows (p. 244): "Als Kriemhilds Neffen konnte ihn ein Mensch, der seine Gedanken beisammen hatte, nicht bezeichnen, da K. niemals eine Schwester hat."

<sup>84</sup> Cf. 307, 7 ff.; 588, 3 ff.; 387 ff.; 199 ff.

translation of a French original. Again, we find epics which are free inventions, but have been suggested or influenced by French models. In general it may be asserted that the work of the German epic-writers is not a slavish translation or imitation, but a reshaping or recreating that displays a great amount of independence. It lies outside the scope of the present undertaking to make a detailed comparative study of the German epics and their sources. Often there is no French source extant, and in many cases where we have to do with epics which are largely German inventions, such as the *Jüngere Titurel*, *Daniel*, *Gârel*, *Krône*, *Demantin*, *Tandareis und Flordibel*, *Meleranz*, *Seifrid de Ardemont*, and *Wigamur*, it will never be possible to determine to what extent on the one hand French influence has been effective and on the other hand German social organization is reflected. Because of this foreign influence, as well as because of its greater artificiality, the court epic must be considered only as secondary evidence. But it must also be pointed out that influence has not been exerted in one direction only. French scholars, accepting the results of the investigations of Pio Rajna, Gaston Paris, and others, now commonly concede that the French popular epic is of Germanic origin, and that it reveals traces of Teutonic law and custom.<sup>85</sup> It was not until the 9th century that French poetry had finally and definitely separated from German poetry. In view of historical evidence of the prominence of the avunculate among the Germanic tribes at the time of Tacitus (cf. below, 135 ff.) and the occurrence of the uncle-nephew motif in the earliest documents of Germanic literature, it is much more probable that the French popular epic has borrowed this motif from German than that the reverse has occurred, if indeed that motif was not indigenous in both countries. If, as the writer believes, the evidence of matrilineal conditions which both classes of epics preserve may be considered Indo-European

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Gaston Paris: *Romania*, XIII, 610: "Nos chansons de geste ont un caractère germanique et par l'usage même auquel elles doivent l'existence, et par l'esprit qui les anime, et par le milieu où elles se sont développées." Also L. Petit de Julleville: *Hist. de la Langue et de la Littérature française*, Paris, 1910, 55: "Il n'est plus permis aujourd'hui de nier l'origine germanique de notre littérature épique, et c'est un point sur lequel les érudits français semblent d'accord avec les allemands."



in origin, the extent of international influence in the epic is not a matter of great moment.<sup>86</sup>

The immediate forerunners of the court epic are the *Alexanderlied* and the *Rolandslied*. In Lamprecht's *Alexander* (ca. 1130) we find that the hero is named after his mother's brother (*Alex. Str.* 111 ff.). In Ulrich's *Alexanderlied*, written a century and a half later, Negûsar is identified after his maternal uncle King Ninus (8217 ff.), and Kassander is pointed out as *swester suon* of Alexander (23605). Furthermore, when Alexander has a bad dream in which he is stabbed to the heart and thereupon sees his mother, the dream is interpreted to him to mean,

23605

“dîner lieben swester suon  
hât übel gedâht an dir tuon.”

but no further use is made of the incident.

The *Rolandslied*, like its French source, the *Chanson de Roland*, glorifies the relationship between Karl and his sister's son Roland. The Old French *chanson* has been adequately discussed by Farnsworth.<sup>87</sup> Comparison with the German version shows no noteworthy differences in the treatment of relationships. The story of the *Rolandslied* is retold in later epics known as *Karl der Grosse*, by Stricker, and the *Karlmeinet*, the latter having been written by an anonymous poet nearly two centuries later than the *Rolandslied* and being in reality a compilation from a number of sources including a later version of the *Rolandslied* which is not extant. Neither of these differs materially in plot or viewpoint from the original so far as they cover the same ground. We shall consider the three versions together.

Since the uncle-nephew relationship forms the warp and woof of these epics, it is hardly possible to give an adequate account of it without a review of the entire epics. It is necessary to be as brief as possible.

How prominent the young nephew is in the councils of his uncle is shown by the complaint which Genelun makes:

<sup>86</sup> Cf. below, 167 ff., 173.

<sup>87</sup> *Op. cit.*, *passim*.



*Rol.*, 1104      “thînen vursten ist iz allen leit  
 thaz thu in thînen grôzen wizzen  
 unsih alle lâst sizzen.  
 iz gêt uns ane thie êre  
 nune zemet niht, lieber herre;  
 thîn neve Ruolant  
 uberruofet uns alle samt.”  
 (Cf. *Karlm.* 396, 30 ff.; 432 b, 36.)

Karl's favoritism toward Roland is the subject of criticism by Oliver in *Karl der Grosse*, when the latter quarrels with Roland over the honor of fighting the dangerous foe Ospinal. Oliver ascribes the emperor's partiality to the fact that Roland is his sister's son, and wishes that he, too, were a nephew, to receive favored treatment:

A 413 b, 64      Olyuere begunde dat sere claen,  
 Want ir Karles suster son seyt  
 Dar vmb deot hey vren willen alle zyt.  
 Were ich eyn syner neuen,  
 He soulden mir dat vechten geuen.

Oliver is so vexed that he blows his horn and leaves Karl's court with all his followers. Karl, regretting this, asks his nephew as a special favor to yield precedence to Oliver, and loath as he is to give up the honor of the combat, Roland not only yields to his uncle's wishes but lends Oliver his precious sword Durendart (414, 19 ff.).

When the question of the sending of a messenger to bear an ultimatum to Marsilie is being discussed, Roland impetuously springs up and asks to be sent; but the emperor is unwilling to expose him to so much danger. Finally Karl acts upon his nephew's suggestion that the latter's step-father Genelûn be sent. Genelûn, seeking to avoid his selection from cowardly fear, makes his final appeal to Karl in the name of his son Baldewin, who is also Karl's sister's son:

*Rol.*, 1442      Genelûn viel theme keisere zu vuozen.  
 “herre,” sprach er, “mahte ih noh geniezen,  
 thîn swester ist mîn wîf.  
 und verliese ih then lîf,

sô .nimet Ruolant  
 al mîn erve zuo sîner hant:  
 er verstôzet thîner swester sune.

In his indignant denial of this imputation Roland points out that he would not so ill repay his uncle who had fostered him from childhood:

*Rol.*, 1480            ih neplege niet untrûwen.  
                          sô mahte then keiser rûwen  
                          thaz er mih gezogen hât  
                          unde nimet mih thikke an sînen rât.

Karl is overcome with grief when Genelûn, who is inwardly plotting revenge against Roland, suggests that the latter be left behind to rule in Spain,<sup>88</sup> a suggestion to which the uncle must assent, since all the nobles are agreed:

*Rol.*, 2965            ther keiser harte erbleihte  
                          thaz houbet er nither neihte,  
                          thaz gehôrde vone ime flôh,  
                          thaz gesiune ime enzôh,  
                          vile trûrlîchen er saz.  
                          sih verwandelôte allez thaz an ime was.  
                          (Cf. *Karl d. Gr.*, 3505.)

At this critical juncture the emperor turns frequently to prayer for his nephew, whom he calls at various times "*mîne huote*" (*Rol.*, 1310; *Karl d. Gr.*, 3842) and "*mîne zeseuwe hant*" (*Rol.*, 2974). With first thought for the emperor's honor, Roland does not hesitate for a moment to accept the perilous post; but his uncle's grief is profound:

*Rol.*, 3216            ther keiser weinete vile sêre.  
                          vile thikke er in kuste;  
                          er thruhte in ane sîne bruste,  
                          er beswief in mit then armen.  
                          er sprah: "nu muoze iz got erbarmen,  
                          thaz ih thih hie muoz lâzen.  
                          jane mah ih niht thar zuo gebenmâzen  
                          thaz ih thâ fure nâme,  
                          helet, thaz ih thih tagelîchen sâhe."

<sup>88</sup> Except in the *Karlm.* (451, 11 ff.), where Karl is pleased at Wellis' (Genelûn's) suggestion, since he suspects no treason; nevertheless here too the parting is bitter.

At their parting,

*Karl d. Gr.*, 3991      Dâ wart von in beiden,  
                              dô si sich muosen scheiden,  
                              ein jâmer stare und alsô grôz  
                              daz man den klegelichen dôz  
                              über eine mîle vernam. (Cf. *Karlm.*  
                              A 451 b, 41.)

Left behind in Spain, Roland is attacked by an overwhelming force of the heathen and in sore straits blows a mighty blast on his horn. At its sound,

*Rol.*, 6075      ther keiser begunde vore angesten swizen:  
                              er kom ein teil ûz sînen wizen.  
                              er unthulte harte:  
                              thaz hâr prah er ûz there swarte. (Cf. *Karl d. Gr.*,  
                              7108 ff., 7975 ff.; *Karlm.* 458 b, 44 ff.)

The emperor's worst fears are confirmed when he reaches the scene of the battle; taking Roland up in his arms,

*Rol.*, 7508      er begonde in wantelen  
                              al hine unde here.  
                              vile innelihchen sprach er:  
                              "ôwî vile lieber neve,  
                              wie ungerne ih nu lebe!  
                              want scolte ih zuo thir in thaz graf!  
                              thu wære mînes alteres staf:  
                              mirne geseah nie sô leithe.  
                              thu wârîz allez eine.  
                              thu wære mîn zesewiu hant.  
                              \*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
                              thaz bluot flôz ime vone then ougen  
                              ûf then stein er gesaz:  
                              ienoh hiute ist er naz,  
                              thâ thaz bluot ane flôz. (Cf. *Karl d. Gr.*,  
                              8322 ff.; *Karlm.* 465 b, 66 ff.)

From now on the Kaiser thinks of nothing but revenge; it is his one impulse both in the defeat which he inflicts upon the heathen and in the trial of the traitor Genelûn. In connection with this trial we find an uncle-nephew relationship in the German epics which does not exist in the French source.<sup>89</sup> When Karl desires

<sup>89</sup> In the French *Ch. de R.* (361, 362) Pinabel is merely Genelûn's friend and peer.

Genelûn's punishment at the trial, the latter's nephew bravely steps forward and demands the right of defending his uncle in an ordeal (*Rol.*, 8785; *Karlm.*, 521, 25 ff.). His loyalty to his uncle is expressed in the words:

*Karl d. Gr.*, 11789      er wolte in lebendec bringen  
                              hin wider ze Kerlingen,  
                              oder bî im tôt gelîgen.

In the bitter combat of the ordeal, which turns against Pinabel, the latter is strongly urged to sacrifice Genelûn and restore himself to grace. But he prefers death to desertion of his uncle:

*Rol.*, 8960      "thurh Genelûne kom ih here.  
                              nemag ih ime niht gethingen,  
                              sone wile ih niht liegen.  
                              nemah iz niwet bezzere werthen,  
                              ih wile thurh ine ersterben." (Cf. *Karl d. Gr.*  
                              12031 ff.)

In the *Karlmeinet* the traitor Wellis (Genelûn) has the support of two sisters' sons,<sup>90</sup> Pynabel and Herffen, who come with a following of five hundred knights to effect his rescue (A 520, 51 ff.). But here too Pynabel is defeated in the ordeal and hanged. Gebewîn, Nibelunc, and Gotfrit, mentioned in the *Rolandslied* merely as Karl's men, are presented in *Karl der Grosse* as his *neven*. He uses them as leaders and messengers (9145 ff., 9159 ff., 10977 ff.). A more prominent figure in the same epic is Gerhart, who has fostered his nephew and niece, Oliver and Alîta. Himself childless, he has made these relatives his heirs (11131). The uncle's great concern for his nephew's safety is shown in 11031 ff., 11163 ff., 11237 ff., and his grief over Oliver's death is described in 11237 ff. In the *Karlmeinet*, too, Gerhart has fostered his sister's children, Oliver and Alda. The first question which he puts to the men returning from Spain

<sup>90</sup> According to A 520, 71: '*sy waren synre suster kint.*' Concerning Pynabel this relationship is confirmed by 520, 54. But Herffen is here first introduced as '*Pynabels oemen soen*' 520, 58—an exceptional, patrilineal introduction even if we reconcile the two statements by the assumption that Herffen's and Pynabel's mothers were sisters and that '*oem*' means here an uncle by marriage only.

concerns the welfare of his nephew (497, 52). When the sad news of the latter's death is imparted to him, emotional depth is added to the scene of grief by the simple statement: *Olyuer was Gerartz suster soen* (506, 59).

Among the heathen, Matêus (*Rol.*, 575 ff.; *Karl d. Gr.*, 1161 ff.) and Algalifes appear as uncles (*Rol.*, 1875 ff.; *Karl d. Gr.*, 2647 ff., 2399 ff.). The latter, who has a nephew in the heathen king Marsilie, is the king's counsellor, and is quick in his desire to avenge insult to his nephew. The latter, in turn, protects Algalifes from Karl. In the *Karl der Grosse* Marsilie also has a nephew whom he considers as a son, and to whom he intrusts the leadership of a large army (6301 ff.). There are two paternal uncles, Carpîn (5057 ff.) and Malprime's uncle (9967 ff.), each of whom loses his life in the attempt to avenge a brother's son, as does the paternal uncle Ganebeus in *Karlmeinet* (482, 8 ff.).

The last of the epics which retell the story of Karl and Roland is the *Karlmeinet*, which, as stated above, includes other material than that contained in the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Rolandslied*, or the *Karl der Grosse*; and here again uncles and nephews are very much in evidence. The heathen king, Bremunt, who has been defeated by Galaffers, King of Spain, is preparing a new campaign against him. His sister's son, Kayphas, is described as an unusually powerful man. The uncle places great reliance in his nephew's strength, and the latter is completely subservient to the wishes of his uncle. Sending for Kayphas, the uncle recounts to him his previous defeat. The nephew swears that he will bring victory to his uncle, who knights him in return for the promised services (A 46 b, 51 ff.). Moving upon Galaffers at once with a large army, Bremunt camps on the shore of the river Tahge. Here he gives his nephew command of an army and sends him across the river to begin the attack. After a bloody battle Kayphas is forced to leave the field. His uncle praises him for his brave fighting, and asks him to rest. Karl, riding secretly to the river during a fog the next morning, comes into contact with Kayphas, who had approached from the other side. In the ensuing combat Karl beheads his foe, and hanging



his head to his saddle, makes his way back across the river. When the uncle discovers the death of his nephew, his grief is uncontrollable:

A 73, 5            Hey begonde weynen ind clagen,  
                       Sich ryssen ind hantslagen.  
                       O wach, we is mir gescheit,  
                       So mir nu erslagen leit  
                       Kayphas myn neue der vromste man,  
                       De van syner zyt ee leyff gewan!  
                       \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*     \*  
                       Do warde eme van ruwen also leide,  
                       Dat hey neder vp de heyde  
                       Dry werff von eme seluer lach,  
                       So hey en horde noch en sach.

Determined to avenge the death of his nephew, Bremunt encounters Karl the following morning in battle. In the long combat he finally loses his sword Durendart; facing death at Karl's hand, he asserts that if killed he will be grimly avenged by his uncle Corsant:

A 92 b, 50        Dat mach ich wael vur war geyn,  
                       Als van Taberne Corsant  
                       Myn ome der konynck hait erkant  
                       De mere, dat du mich hais erslagen,  
                       Dat wil ich dyr vur waer sagen,  
                       So sal hey in kurtzen zyden  
                       Mit kraecht dir durch ryden  
                       Vranckrich ind alle dyne lant.  
                       Dar sall gescheyn beyde roeff ind brant  
                       Sonder dynen wille  
                       Beyde offenbar ind stille,  
                       Want hey is der hogester konynck eyen,  
                       Den de sonne ee bescheyn.  
                       Ouch was hey mir so rechte holt,  
                       Dat hey noch durch seluer noch durch golt  
                       Mich neit en leyst vngewrochen."

This threat, however, is of no avail to save Bremunt's life.

To reward Karl for his services in killing Bremunt, Galaffer with his army accompanies Karl to France in order to help him recover his crown from usurpers. They pass on the way through the territory of Karl's loyal friend Gerffin. The latter is highly

displeased at the trespass of this strange army, and wonders how he can learn its identity. His beloved nephew Godyn offers to confront the approaching army and challenge any knight among them to single combat, in the hope of securing the desired information from the defeated foe. Gerffin thanks his nephew for the good plan, but, unwilling to expose him to this danger, takes the task upon himself as the more hardened and experienced man (A 105 b, 34 ff.). However ardently the nephew covets the adventure for himself, he nevertheless acquiesces at once in his uncle's will. Gerffin is very proud of Godyn (A 111 b, 35), and they cover themselves with glory in the battle before Paris, fighting side by side. The uncle's authority to dispose of his nephew in marriage is illustrated in A 213, 54 ff.

In this same battle Karl's brother-in-law, Herzog Balyn, is accompanied by a *neve*, Emelriche (A, 114 b, 33 ff.). Twice we are told how bravely the latter fights at Balyn's side (A 116, A 117, 1 ff.). Morant, Karl's faithful standardbearer, also has two *neven* in fosterage, Fuckelmet and Elinant. While absent on leave Morant is accused by Rohart of improper relations with Karl's wife Galya. Karl is urged to entice Morant and his two *neven* to court in order to punish him (228 b, 54 ff.). A messenger is sent to Morant with the promise of the bestowal of great possessions upon the latter's nephews. Morant is delighted at this recognition of his charges, but bad dreams deter him from accepting the summons to court. A second messenger specifically mentions two great fiefs intended for the nephews; and now the apprehension of the uncle yields to his affection for his nephews and he goes to court with them. Accused by the King, Galya and Morant deny their guilt, and the latter demands an ordeal. Faced with the necessity of supplying hostages according to custom, and having only his nephews with him, Morant asks them to do their duty by him as he would do his by them. They assent without delay and are confined in heavy chains (241 b, 41 ff.). Seeking to avoid the dangerous ordeal, Morant's accuser Rohart makes fresh accusations which goad Karl to order the immediate execution of Morant and Galya; but the intervention

of Baldewin and Roland, Karl's sisters' sons, prevents this summary action. These two nephews, who have great influence over their uncle, win him back to a desire for due process of law, and the ordeal takes place. While the conflict rages, the two nephews, Elinant and Fuckelmet, fettered as they are, pray fervently for their uncle's success; and after Morant's vindication Karl knights them, provides them with brides and gives them fiefs, amply apologizing to all Morant's relatives.

At this point Karl's sister's son Roland comes to the fore. In the battle for the holy sépulcher, we see Karl and Roland fighting side by side, the nephew counseling and cheering his uncle (331, 21 ff.). Again, we find the uncle trying to restrain his nephew from the dangerous combat with the giant Ferracut and yielding only reluctantly to Roland's persistent urging (363 b, 63 ff.; 364, 17 ff.). The narrative then takes up the story of the *Rolandslied*, and only a few points in variation require mention. When Wellis (Genelûn) departs upon his mission to Marselis, from which he has little hope of returning alive, he entrusts his *oeme* (uncle?) Wyneman, who would have liked only too well to accompany him and who sees him off, with the guardianship of his family and land (443, 59 ff.); and in so doing he charges him with the proper care of his sister's son—the same who later gives his life as champion for his uncle's cause—before mention of his own offspring (A 444, 11 ff.). A Graf von Fundrall also appears in this version as Oliver's *oeme*. Upon seeing his nephew's corpse he is overcome with grief. Having planned to make Oliver his sole heir, Fundrall now decides to devote his wealth to religious purposes for the sake of his nephew's soul (A 492, 29 ff.).

Comparing the French original, the *Chanson de Roland*, with the three German epics, we find that there is some tendency in the latter to increase the number of relationships. Thus in the *Chanson de Roland*, Pinabel is mentioned only as Genelûn's friend and peer (cf. above); in the *Rolandslied* and *Karl der Grosse* he appears as *neve*, in *Karlmeinet* he is specified as *suster soen* (520, 54), and is also accompanied by a second sister's son Herffen (520, 71). Again, in the *Chanson de Roland*, Pinabel is

opposed in the ordeal by Tierris, who is apparently of no relation to Roland; in the *Rolandslied* Tirrih is “*sîn nâheste geborene mâh*” (8825); and in *Karl der Grosse* Dietrich calls Roland his *neve* (11820, 11971), and uses Roland’s sword Durendart in avenging his death. And as we have seen, the *Karlmeinet* presents an uncle (*oeme* = ?) to Wellis (Genelûn) in Wyneman (443, 59), and a similar relative to Oliver in the *Graf von Fundrall* (A 492, 29). It should be noted in all three of the German epics, as in the *Chanson de Roland*, that although Karl’s son is in existence and is legal heir, he remains entirely in the background. This son is offered by Karl to Roland’s grief-stricken betrothed as a compensation for the loss of Roland.

In the fragments of the epic *Graf Rudolf* (ca. 1170) which are preserved, Graf Rudolf and Bonifait appear as *neven*. In Rudolf’s flight with Irmengart, which is very similar to that of Walther and Hildegund in the *Waltharilied*, Bonifait dies in defense of the young couple. Though it is not impossible that we have to do here with uncle and nephew, it seems more probable that Rudolf and his *neve* are cousins.

The *Eneide* by Heinrich von Veldeke (ca. 1185), the *Liet von Troye* by Herbort von Fritzlar (ca. 1215) and a later version of the same narrative, the *Trojanischer Krieg*, left unfinished by Konrad von Würzburg at his death in 1287, all deal with material from antiquity, borrowed through the French. In the *Eneide* Ulixes, in disguise as Sînôn, represents himself as bent upon avenging the death of his uncle (990 ff.). Yljonix, Eneas’ messenger to King Lâtîn, is accompanied by a *neve*, and other *neven* are mentioned in lines 9012 ff., 10858 ff. In the *Liet von Troye* Xerxes is accompanied by his sister’s son Menon (4061), and Cantipus meets death at Hector’s hands in the attempt to avenge the slaying of his sister’s son Philatoas (8814 ff.). The author, Herbort, criticizes the praise which his source bestows upon King Pelias, since he was faithless to his nephew Jason (in this case a brother’s son, 112 ff.). The uncle-nephew relationship is brought out still more prominently in the *Trojanischer Krieg*. When

Lâmedon's sister's son Eliâchim is slain by Pollux, the uncle's grief is boundless, and he makes a solemn vow of vengeance:

12124                    in Troye wil ich niemer komen,  
                           ê daz ich dich gerochen hân.  
                           des wirt ein eit von mir getân  
                           den gôten algemeine.  
                           dîn lîp clâr unde reine  
                           geblüemet wol mit triuwen  
                           der muoz mich iemer riuwen,  
                           die wîle ich ûf der erden won.''  
                           sus clagte künic Lâmedon  
                           den jungen, sîner swester barn.

Promising great rewards to those who help him avenge his nephew, he says:

12186                    an mînem sippenbluote  
                           spûr ich sô leiden aneblic,  
                           daz mich des grimmen tôdes stric  
                           hie knüpfet in sîn netzegarn,  
                           ob mîner lieben swester barn,  
                           der vor mir lît erstochen,  
                           niht hiute wirt gerochen.''

Ulixes derides and reproaches Achilles for having dressed in female garb, and points out that he has thereby shamed his mother's brother Jupiter (28444). In asking for the hand of Licomêden's daughter, Achilles identifies himself by naming his mother and his maternal uncle, making no reference to his father (28772). Ajax is repeatedly identified by reference to his maternal uncle (37128, 37186, 37396); similarly Euripilus (44691). And Ajax mourns the fate which separates him from his mother's brother (37397 ff.).

In the 13th century it is no longer antiquity which has the center of the stage in the French and German court epics, but the legends of King Artûs (or Arthur), originating in Old Britain. We shall consider first the works of the three bright stars of the German court epic, and then the epics produced by their successors, the epigones.

In Hartmann's *Êrec*, the festival or beauty contest to which Êrec takes Ênîte is given by the latter's maternal uncle Îmâîn



(435 ff.). He is ready to do everything possible for them, and at once supplies his niece with suitable dress (633 ff.). He significantly honors Êrec, partly because the latter is his niece's champion and partly because he is victor in the contest. Before their departure to King Artûs' court, he bestows rich gifts upon them (1406 ff.).

Artûs is represented as having a number of *neven* about him, but his favorite among them, Gâwein, is the only one specifically defined as *swestersun*. Eager to see his *neve* (1794, 9944) Êrec, Artûs especially charges Gâwein to fetch him:

4872	Gâwein, nû wis gemant wiez under uns ist gewant, daz dû mîn naehster friunt bist, und sûme dich deheine frist mêre durch die liebe mîn. hilf mir und der kûnegîn daz wir Êrecken gesehen: sô mac mir liebers niht geschehen.''
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Gâwein accomplishes the mission, even though he finds it necessary to resort to a ruse. Later Êrec, after his victory over Mabonagrîn, conducts numerous women, whose husbands his defeated foe had slain, to his uncle Artûs, to adorn the latter's court (9944 ff.). King Ivreins and Mabonagrîn are also uncle and nephew. Mabonagrîn, returning from abroad with a wife gained by elopement, brings her to the home of his uncle, who thereupon dubs him a knight (9482 ff.). The happiness of the family is disturbed by an oath which the young wife, fearing eventual desertion, exacts from her husband, to the effect that he remain alone with her in the garden at his uncle's castle until defeated. The husband, being of great strength, kills all knights who approach. This brings great sorrow to the land and explains why the uncle, in speaking of the frightful prowess of the grim knight, is also under the shadow of the gloom cast by his nephew's oath, and why the uncle's concern is for Êrec rather than for the nephew when the former enters the garden to give combat. The nephew himself is in the end greatly pleased at his own defeat, for it brings welcome release.

In the *Iwein*, Kâlogrêant has been unhorsed and deprived of his mount by a powerful knight at the magic well under the linden. Iwein considers it his right and duty to avenge his *neve* (806), and is much exercised when Artûs proposes to go to the well with his full strength, for he apprehends that the king will give the distinction of the combat to his sister's son Gâwein (911 ff.). In order to forestall such a turn of events, Iwein secretly leaves at once and takes vengeance upon his nephew's despoiler. As the time approaches for Artûs to start on his expedition, Kaiî taunts Kâlogrêant because his uncle Iwein remains absent, despite his duty of avenging his kin (2456 ff.). Later in the narrative Iwein happens to stop at the castle of a knight who is suffering attack by the giant Harpîn, to whom he has denied the hand of his daughter. Two of the knight's sons have already been killed by the giant, while the other four are prisoners and are threatened with death. The distressed father turns to the mother's brother of his children, Gâwein, for their succor:

4730                    ez ist mir sô umb in gewant  
                      daz er mir müese gestân  
                      ze mîme kumber den ich hân:  
                      mîn wîp ist sîn swester.

Unfortunately Gâwein is absent on the attempt to rescue his uncle's abducted wife Genover; the knight consequently adjures Iwein, in the name of his comrade Gâwein, to stay and help him. Iwein has promised to champion Lûnete, Queen Laudine's maid; but though in honor bound to keep this engagement, he feels that he must stay, for it is the sister's sons of his beloved comrade who are in peril (4905 ff.). Gâwein later bears this service in mind with constant gratitude (7610 ff.; 7745 ff.).

The world's greatest epic of love, *Tristan und Isolt*, appears in medieval German literature in two versions, the older being that of Eilhart (*ca.* 1170), the more renowned that of Gottfried (1210). The latter poet left his work incomplete, and conclusions were written by two succeeding poets. In all these poems the uncle and sister's son, King Marke and Tristan, are the central characters, and around them the entire plot turns.

In Eilhart's version the youth Tristan obtains permission of his father to go to the court of his mother's brother, where he presents himself incognito. He is usually identified in the epic as "*Markes swester son*" (631, 734, 5623). In Gottfried's version the boy's father is dead, and he reaches his uncle's castle by accident rather than by design.<sup>91</sup> In each version they feel their perfect compatibility from first sight. Marke chooses Tristan for his intimate companion, knights him, and is extremely happy when he learns that the youth is his sister's son, declaring that he shall be his heir (*Gottfr. Trist.* 4297 ff.; *Eilh. Trist.* 1337 ff.). The devotion which the uncle feels finds repeated expression, as in his declaration that his happiness shall consist in passing all his days with his nephew, his desire to share all his worldly goods with him, and in his determination to forego marriage in order that his heritage may go to him. The reciprocal devotion of the nephew is well shown in his resolve to free his uncle from the long-endured humiliation of paying tribute to the King of Ireland, by meeting the latter's challenger Morolt in single combat. Marke is deeply worried over Tristan's resolve, and does his utmost to dissuade him. Failing in this, he accouters him with his own hands in his own prized armor, mounts him upon his own charger, and gives him a fine sword and shield (*Eilh. Trist.* 750 ff.; *Gottfr. Trist.* 6246 ff.). Although victorious, Tristan is wounded with a poisoned sword. Realizing that the alternative is between death and a cure at the hands of Morolt's hostile niece Isolde, Tristan sets out in a boat for Ireland. This is an occasion of great grief for the uncle, who stands gazing with tear-dimmed eyes after the disappearing craft (*Eilh. Trist.* 1130 ff.; *Gottfr. Trist.* 7374 ff.); but his joy is equally great upon the return of his nephew healed.

Jealous relatives endeavor to thwart the king's desire to have a sole heir in Tristan, by urging him to marry (*Eilh. Trist.* 1337 ff.; *Gottfr. Trist.* 4297 ff.). He steadfastly resists, and

<sup>91</sup> The foster father, who has vainly searched for Tristan, gives thanks to God when he learns that he has landed in Kurneval:

*Gottfr. Trist.* 837 "So ist er rehte komen hin heim,  
wan Marke der ist sîn oeheim."

finally aims to make their purposes miscarry by choosing an impossible bride; having found a woman's hair, he swears that he will marry only the woman to whom it belongs. But when Marke's relatives hold Tristan responsible for this ruse and the latter feels that his life is menaced, Marke must permit him to take ship to find this Lady of the Lost Hair. Having secured Isolde for his uncle, Tristan breaks faith with the latter under the compulsion of a love potion. As leader among the relatives of the king who are jealous of Tristan we find another sister's son of Marke, Antrêt,<sup>92</sup> who spares no pains to estrange Marke from his favorite nephew, reporting the latter's illicit relations with the king's wife and urging Tristan's death as punishment. When Marke is finally, through the evidence of his own eyes, convinced of Tristan's guilt, he banishes him; but after a while he forgives him and restores him to favor. Then follows a long series of similar deceptions, discoveries, banishments and forgivings, until the action is terminated by Tristan's death.

A strong attachment exists between young Isolde (I) and her maternal uncle Morolt. It is to his niece that Morolt sends his messengers when he is wounded by Tristan; she hastens to meet her returning uncle, but finds him already dead (*Eilh. Trist.*, 944 ff.). Her grief at his burial is poignant, and though her father is living, she is declared to have lost in Morolt

*Eilh. Trist.*, 1025      den allir libestin man  
                               den sie ze der werlde î gewan.

When Isolde identifies Tristan as her uncle's slayer, she seeks to avenge the latter with her own hands (*Eilh. Trist.*, 1893 ff.; *Gottfr. Trist.*, 10142 ff.). With the cry "*du giltest mînen oeheim!*" she is about to slay him, but is finally deterred, partly by her own gentle nature, partly by the restraining influence of her mother, who has pledged protection to Tristan, and again by concern over the suit of the hated Truchsess. Tristan has a claim to her hand as the promised reward for the killing of the dragon; but the father is greatly relieved at Tristan's suggestion that Isolde be given to his uncle Marke, for he knows that

<sup>92</sup> Antrêt is not mentioned in *Gottfr. Trist.* He appears, however, in Ulrich's continuation of the epic.



the remembrance of Morolt's death would have embittered his daughter's entire married life with Tristan (*Eilh. Trist.*, 2246 ff.).

There are various uncles and sister's sons in minor rôles: King Artûs and Walwan (Gâwân), whom he treats with great indulgence; the besieged king Havelîn, who receives most valiant assistance from "zwen sînen swestir sonen":

*Eilh. Trist.*, 6055      dô râchin die helde gemeit  
ihres ohemes leit  
als ez gûten knechten wol gezam.

and even Tristan is provided with a sister's son, Tantrisel:

*Eilh. Trist.*, 8654      dô was von sînem lande  
ein kint mit im dare komen,  
daz was sîner swestir sone:  
daz was im lip, des hate he recht .

The constant assistance which Tristan receives from this child, who in the later version of Heinrich von Freiberg (*ca.* 1300) is Marke's sister's son, is more consistently explained by the relationship of sister's son to Tristan as given in the older version of Eilhart. The name Tantrisel itself suggests the close relationship to Tristan. A new relationship is injected into the plot by Heinrich, who, in his continuation, makes King Marke the uncle of Artûs (*cf.* 2497 ff.; 2995 ff.). Here also, diverging from the earlier versions, the nephew Tristan chides himself for his dishonor and sin in taking his uncle's wife (204 ff.),

269                      wan er bedâchte starke,  
daz der kûnic Marke  
sîner muoter bruoder was,

and at times actually succeeds in stamping out his love for Isolde.

Despite the oft-repeated deception and deep wrong which he has suffered, grief has possession of Marke's breast at the death of his nephew. On learning that Tristan and Isolde had been under the spell of a love potion,

*Ul. Trist.* 584, 12      sô vaste er want die hende,  
daz si muosen krachen.  
vil weinens, âne lachen  
was under sime gesinde.  
nâch sîner swester kinde  
hât er vil grôze ungehabe.



It is the uncle's most poignant regret that he did not know of the potion before, and that it is too late to make the lovers happy (*Eilh. Trist.*, 9478 ff.; *Heinr. Trist.*, 6726ff.). Commentators have stated that Tristan's relationship to his uncle makes his deeds appear all the blacker. But there is another aspect to the plot. The older versions show no moral struggle in the nephew. He does not abduct the queen, nor is he a vile seducer. His breach of faith towards his uncle is not a voluntary one, but is represented as wholly due to the irresistible power of the love potion. On the other hand, the uncle's love is such that he is endlessly able to forgive. The narrative may be fairly said to place the emphasis on the closeness of the uncle-nephew tie rather than upon its failure.

Careful study of medieval Germany's most renowned court epic, the *Parzivâl*, reveals looming more or less clearly in the background, as the original theme of the entire plot, the duty to one's kin, in particular to the mother and the mother's brother, and the penalty which comes from violation of that duty.<sup>93</sup> Although the relationship is not greatly stressed in the *Parzivâl*, it is important to note that Anfortas, the keeper of the grail, hopes for the help of his sister's son, Parzivâl, to heal him from his deadly wound by the asking of the necessary question, and it is probable that the nephew's struggle to reach and help this uncle, whom, however, in the *Parzivâl* he does not know, is the original essence of the story. Parzivâl's first meeting with Anfortas is a failure. The nephew is covered with his aunt's mantle and is given a sword by his uncle, but he fails to put the necessary question (V, 129 ff., 468 ff.). In the midst of his wanderings and efforts to reach the grail Parzivâl learns from another maternal uncle, Trevrizent, that in Íther he has slain a cousin, and that his mother Herzeloyd, whom he has deserted, has died of a broken heart over his departure. As though this breach of kinship ties forever barred him, Trevrizent believes that his nephew can never reach his uncle Anfortas; and out of pity for him and to save him useless trouble prevaricates to him

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Nitze, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

about the grail (XVI, 335 ff.). After much wandering, however, Parzivâl again reaches Munsalvaesche, where his words: "*Oeheim, was wirret dir?*" at once deliver Anfortas from his long suffering (XVI, 269 ff.).

The main guidance which Parzivâl receives comes from his maternal uncle Trevrizent, to whom he appeals as a sister's son to learn the truth (IX, 1309 ff.). Although this ascetic uncle is able to offer only roots and herbs to eat, these are an abundance to the nephew, coming from his uncle's hands,

IX, 1604                    durch die getriuwe minne  
die'r gein sînem wirte truoc.

Later, when Parzivâl has become Lord of the Grail, he again meets Trevrizent, and expresses his desire to have the guidance of his counsel until death shall part them:

XVI, 366                "dînen rât wil ich haben doch,  
die wîle uns scheidet niht der tût:  
du riet' mir ê in grôzer nôt."

Feirefiz, having fallen in love with Parzivâl's maternal aunt, Ripanse, is advised by the latter's brother Anfortas to turn to her sister's son for help:

XVI, 749                "iwer bruoder (Parzivâl) ist ir swester sun:  
der mag iu dâ wol helfe tuon."

Artûs and his favorite sister's son Gâwân are likewise prominent in the *Parzivâl*. Gâwân points out the close bond between his uncle and himself in VI, 705 ff., and the nephew is occasionally identified through his uncle (cf. VIII, 546: "*Artûses swester sun*"). When Keie is wounded by Parzivâl, he tries to stir Gâwân to revenge by arguing that in his being disabled it is Artûs who has suffered loss:

VI, 555                "ir sît mins hêrren swester sun:  
\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*  
iwer oeheim, der kûnec hêr,  
gewinnet niemer sôlhen Keien mêr."

Gâwân is accused of faithlessness and challenged to mortal combat by a strange knight who proves to be Kingrimursel. At this

Artûs is very unhappy and deeply resents the reflection cast upon his nephew. He declares that if Gâwân were dead and unable to clear his honor, he himself would take up the battle and not permit this tarnish to rest on his nephew's reputation; but he feels confident that his nephew will clear himself with his usual prowess (VI, 1273 ff.). Artûs' devotion to Gâwân is brought out particularly on the occasion of the nephew's combat with King Gramoflanz. When Artûs receives the letter asking him to be present, he says:

XIII, 670

. . . . "wol disem süezem tage,  
bî des liehte ich hân vernomen,  
mir sint diu wâren maere komen  
umb' mînen werden swestersun.  
kan ich manlîch dienst tuon,  
durch sippe und durch geselleschaft,  
ob triuwe an mir gewan ie kraft,  
sô leiste ich das mir Gâwân  
hât enboten, obe ich kan."

Gâwân's opponent, Gramoflanz, is likewise a sister's son, and his uncle, Brandelidelîn, comes in pomp to grace the occasion of his nephew's combat (XIV, 98 ff.). Since Gâwân is temporarily incapacitated, Parzivâl takes his place against Gramoflanz; but when it becomes apparent to Brandelidelîn that his sister's son is being defeated, he interferes, stops the combat, and insists that Gâwân shall later meet his opponent in person. Artûs is very sensitive as to his nephew's honor, but nevertheless uses every resource to stop the conflict which is pending, for the sake not only of his nephew but also of his niece, Gâwân's sister Îtonjê, who, it transpires, is in love with Gramoflanz. Becoming convinced that this love is strong enough to stop the conflict, Artûs succeeds in arranging that Gramoflanz shall visit his niece before the duel takes place, offering to him as a special escort of honor his sister's son Bêâkurs. Gramoflanz comes with his uncle. The two uncles meet, drink together, and confer over the situation; Artûs points out to Brandelidelîn that if the latter's "*swester sun*" Gramoflanz should kill his (Artûs') "*swester sun*" Gâwân, Gramoflanz would have to forego the love of Artûs' niece.

Brandelidelin is now as anxious to adjust matters as is Artûs, and through the joint effort of the two maternal uncles concord and harmony are soon reëstablished.

Kaylet has two sisters' sons in Gaschier and Killirjacac. In a conflict this latter nephew is taken prisoner. The captors rejoice at their rare good fortune in thus having the uncle completely at their mercy:

I, 920	wir haben Kaschiere gevangen einen grâven abe: der biutet uns vil grôze habe. der is Kayletes swester sun: swaz uns der nu mac getuon, daz muoz ie dirre gelten. sölch glücke kumet uns selten.
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This nephew is associated with his uncle in another episode related in II, 828 ff.

Other sisters' sons and maternal uncles of lesser importance are mentioned in the epic. There is the Baruch, whom Gahmuret goes to help and who is identified through his mother's brother (II, 1295); îther, too, is evidently Utepandragun's sister's son, and was fostered by his uncle (III, 877 ff.); Vergulaht has two maternal uncles in Gahmuret and Gâlôes (VIII, 670 ff.); and Condwiramurs' son Kardeiz is named after his mother's brother (XVI, 410).

Closely related to the *Parzivâl* is the *Titurel*, of which only fragments remain. These fragments were picked up by a later writer and embodied in a new production, the *Jüngere Titurel*, in which the uncle-nephew motif is again signally prominent.

Schionatulander comes upon a camp of knights, and, not knowing that this is Artûs and his followers, sends his challenge into the camp and awaits opponents. The son of Artûs' sister Sangive<sup>94</sup> wishes to undertake the combat with the strange knight, but Artûs restrains him forcibly because of his youth (1353 ff.). Had the brothers Arilus and Lehelin been equally careful of

<sup>94</sup> That Sangive's children are with their uncle is shown again, 2123, 2124.

their sister's son Arbidol they would have been spared much bitterness. They were closely identified with him in joy and sorrow:

1315           den beiden gie zu hertzen do der klare.  
               Sin freude kunde ir freude hohe setzen,  
               Sin leit ir herzten sere,  
               Sin trouren kunde sie beide an freuden letzen.

Arbidol undertakes the combat and meets death at Schionatulander's hands (1319 ff.). Orilus plans grim retribution (1359 ff.); but he, too, is defeated. Thereupon Schionatulander's maternal uncle Ekunat, of whose presence at the knighting of his nephew we have read before (1098, 1125, 2), decides to take up the challenge. As he bears down upon the strange knight the latter, to every one's surprise, wheels to one side, refusing combat; for he has recognized his uncle's shield (1382). He removes his helmet, and as Ekunat recognizes his sister's son, each horseman joyfully springs from the saddle to embrace the other. The uncle asks for an explanation of his masquerading alone in strange armor. The nephew is glad to tell his whole tale to the uncle, whose help he desires to have (1386 ff.); the uncle replies that his sister's son is dearer to him than any other living person, and that death alone can interfere with the aid he is ready to give him:

1387           Du bis miner swester kint,  
               Des mac ich niht ver gezen.  
               Alle die heute lebentie sint,  
               Die kunnent dich von mir niht gemezen.  
               Ich trage mit dir was dir wirret,  
               Daz hilf ich dir nu wenden,  
               Nieman dann der tot mich des irret.

Schionatulander then tells his uncle about his love for Sigune and her insistence upon his recovering the dog with the leash; the uncle declares that he would willingly renounce the weight of the Caucasus in gold rather than see his nephew's love thwarted (1389 ff.), and the nephew responds with equal warmth (1401 ff.). Ruefully discovering now for the first time that it is Artûs and his knights whom he has been defying, Schionatulander begs his



uncle to gain for him Artûs' pardon and favor (1411 ff.). According to Ekunat's representations, Artûs holds a council to plan reconciliation with the relatives of those whom Schionatulander has slain (1415 ff.). But despite all Artûs' urging Orilus proves intractable. In vain Ekunat explains that each of the youths had but sought adventure without intention of a fatality; Orilus' heart cannot be softened. Not shrinking even from an unparalleled affront to King Artûs, he and his wife unceremoniously ride from camp without leave-taking rather than have anything to do with the slayer of his sister's son. He takes with him the dog with the precious leash, into possession of which he has come, declaring that he has won it by the sword.

Knowing that this leash with its mysterious inscription is essential to his nephew in securing Sigune's love, the uncle, Ekunat, rides after Orilus. A date is set for the battle between them; but when Ekunat's wife reads the inscription aloud, it moves every one to tears and accomplishes what no words had been able to achieve—it softens Orilus' heart, so that a peace is effected.

Unfortunately this peace does not endure. Schionatulander and Ekunat go to help the Baruch against the Babylonians and to avenge the death of Gahmuret, sister's son to Ekunat and cousin to Schionatulander. The latter compels those whom he has defeated to accompany them, and thus Orilus and Lehelin, with their remaining sister's son Erolas, are led to participate in the fighting. Gahmuret is duly avenged, and the Baruch is victorious; but the Christians suffer great losses, among these Erolas (4172 ff.). The grief of their double loss gnaws deeper and deeper into the uncles' hearts, until the impulse to avenge becomes irresistible (4428, 4). In vain the Baruch offers Lehelin mountains of gold to forget his hatred (4330). With the question of the ownership of the leash as a pretext, Orilus and Lehelin demand combat. All attempts to adjust the matter fail (4435 ff.). News comes that the two, assisted by their mother's brother (4481, 3), are approaching Kamofleis in force, burning

and devastating the land. Schionatulander meets them in combat and defeats both; but finally Orilus gets his revenge by killing Schionatulander in a joust (5031 ff.).

The epic assumes as a matter of course that this deed will cost Orilus his life (5114 ff.). Ekunat is depicted as devoid of all joy, and implacably bent upon a single-handed revenge. In the end he slays Orilus, and when his wounds are healed goes to his sister's son, Kailet of Spain.

In Baruch Ackrin's army Essemfrelle is assisted by his brother's sons (3129), and Gloraxidus by his sister's son (3146). The Baruch has the help of his mother's brother (3169) and of his sister's sons, Ardibileis and Ardolise, who are intrusted with important posts of leadership (3182-3183). The uncle's charge to these nephews is recorded in 3183-3190. And his appeal to Sargidun, Algusier, Parssap, and others to protect his sister's sons in the coming battle, at all times riding faithfully at their side, shows his deep concern for their safety (3191-3194). How bravely these nephews fight in the battle, mutually assisting and being assisted by their uncle, is told in 4033-4039.

Sigune is identified as "*des grales herren swester kint*" (5206, 3). We catch glimpses of a deep devotion between her and her mother's brother Anfortas. It is he who finally leads Sigune home from the linden tree where she has mourned her lover so long (5376). And Sigune, talking to Parzivâl, declares that she would creep on all fours all the way to the grail if she could thereby give aid to her sick uncle (5445, 3). Passing reference is made to another uncle and his sister's son, King Marke and Tristan, who participate in the jousts at one of Artûs' tournaments. The uncle is greatly concerned for the safety of his young nephew, and when Marholt unhorses the uncle, Tristan makes every attempt to avenge the deed (2111 ff.).

By the same author as the *Parzivâl* and the *Titirel*, and likewise based upon a French source, is the *Willehalm*, much of the dramatic interest of which centers around the maternal uncle and his sister's sons. Among those who accompany Willehalm

in battle is "*des marcrâven swester kint, Myle*" (14, 21), who is killed and deeply mourned (21, 24 ff.). But the sister's son who is particularly glorified, much as Roland in the *Rolandslied*, which the *Willehalm* consciously imitates, is "*des marcgrâven swestersuon*" Vivianz (22, 31; 41, 13; 47, 28; etc.). He has been fostered by his uncle and aunt from earliest childhood and has received knighthood at his uncle's hands; on this occasion Willehalm also knighted a hundred other youths in his honor, giving each two fine mounts, while Queen Gyburc furnished each with three suits of costly cloth (24, 13 ff.; 62, 23 ff.; 63, 7 ff.).

Vivianz is introduced fighting hotly for his uncle against the heathen in the battle of Alischanz. His great bravery is indicated by the fact that although he is so wounded that his bowels hang down over his saddle, he does not flee, but, catching up his entrails in his banner, fights on (25, 20 ff.). In the course of the battle Vivianz is finally felled to the ground by Halzebier, who is bent upon avenging the killing of his *neve* Pinel and his sister's son Libilûn (45, 30; 46, 18). Trampled by the horses as the battle ebbs and flows over him, Vivianz is at last able to crawl upon a wounded horse and ride along the stream Larkant until he reaches a large linden tree, in the shade of which he lies down to die. Touchingly he prays to God, as his last request, that it may be granted him to see his uncle Willehalm before he dies (49, 15 ff.). An angel promises him that this wish shall be fulfilled, and while Vivianz lies unconscious his uncle, riding to the brook, recognizes the shield of his nephew under the linden. The ensuing scene is replete with tenderness and vibrates with emotion (60-69). The uncle is so overpowered by his sorrow that he falls in a swoon from his horse and lies for a time unconscious by the side of his dying nephew. Recovering, he undoes the latter's battered helmet, takes the blood-stained head gently in his lap, and sobs out his grief in a long monologue. When Vivianz, just before his death, awakens to brief consciousness, the uncle administers a bit of wafer to him as the last sacrament. At imminent peril to his own life, he tries repeatedly to carry his nephew's body with him from the field, and gives up the

attempt only when compelled to fight against overwhelming numbers. When he captures Arofel, the brother of his foe Terramer, in the subsequent fighting, he summarily rejects fabulous offers of ransom and has the prisoner put to death, for "*er dâchte an Vivianzes tôt*" (79, 25).

Willehalm's brothers, Bertram, Gybert, and Arnald, are also deeply interested in their sister's son Vivianz. When Bertram sees his nephew make a charge upon the enemy in the battle, he fights madly to rescue him from his imminent danger (42, 1 ff.); when he himself loses his horse during this fighting, Vivianz in turn brings him a new mount (42, 16 ff.). The grief of the brothers over the loss of their nephew and their efforts to avenge his death are described 120, 14 ff.; 123, 5 ff.; 124, 39 ff.; 171, 9 ff.; 380, 10 ff. There are many uncles and sisters' sons in the army of the heathen, and the nephews are invariably associated with and identified after their uncles. Thus Synagûn, three times identified as "*Halzebieres swester sun*" (27, 14; 220, 16; 294, 23), fights valiantly beside his uncle and brings honor to the heathen army; Fausabrên, "*Terramêrs swester suon*," is avenged by his uncles (371, 7 ff.); Tybald inherits the land Sybilje from his uncle Marsilje (221, 11 ff.); Poydjus is repeatedly identified as Rennwart's "*swester sun*" (289, 10; 444, 27); and Terramêr, speaking to Josweiz, seems to lay stress upon the avuncular bond in his roundabout method of stating their relationship: "*du bist mîner kinde oeheimes sun*" (349, 11), the *oheim* being in this case, as usual, the mother's brother.

A remarkably close bond between uncle and niece appears in the episode where Willehalm, angered beyond control by his sister, attempts to take her life. She escapes into her chamber and urges her daughter to go to her *oheim* and accomplish reconciliation. The effect of the niece's plea upon her uncle is magical; his eyes brim over and he is ready to grant anything she may ask (156, 1 ff.).

So prominent have the sister's sons Vivianz and Mîle been in the epic that even the conclusion, which tells of Willehalm's complete victory, is framed in terms of the lost nephews:



450, 1

Jêsus mit der hoechsten hant  
 die elâren Gybure und daz lant  
 im (Willeh.) des tages im sturme gap:  
 er brâht den prîs unz in sîn grap,  
 daz er nimmer mêr wart sigelôs,  
 sît er ûf Alitschanz verlôs  
 Vivîanzen sîner swester kint,  
 und der mêr die noch vor gote sint  
 die endelösen wîle.  
 sîner swester sun Mile  
 wart wol gerochen an dem tage.

There is but little of further interest in the extension to the *Willehalm* written by a later author, Ulrich von dem Tûrlin. Willehalm here has five *neven*, Vivîanz, Gauters, Joseranz, Mîl, and Gwigrimanz, the latter four of whom, upon the marriage of their uncle with Arabel, honor him by each marrying a princess from Arabel's following. And to enhance the occasion still more, Willehalm's sister's son Mîl gives his sister's daughter Dûzet in marriage to the *emeral*, who has been of great assistance to Willehalm and Arabel in their elopement (CCXCIV, 4 ff.). The fosterage of Vivîanz is referred to in CCCVI, 2 ff., and his knight-  
 ing by his uncle in CCCXXVIII, 12 ff.

In Ulrich von Zatzikhofen's *Lanzelet*, King Artûs appears with three sister's sons, Wâlwein, Karjet, and Lanzelet. The renown of an unknown knight (Lanzelet) having reached the ears of King Artûs, the latter is very anxious to see him at court. He chooses his sister's son Wâlwein for the mission of fetching him. Wâlwein introduces himself as "*des kûneges Artûs swester barn*" (2494 f.), and Lanzelet agrees to accept the invitation. But many adventures intervene. Finally, hearing that a combat is pending between Artûs and Vallerîn, Lanzelet hastens to assist the former. That Artûs and Lanzelet are uncle and sister's son is repeatedly stated (cf. 4949 ff.; 4958 ff.; 5573; 8461; 8801). The fact that Lanzelet is not recognized by Artûs is accounted for by the fact that the former was stolen in infancy. When he makes his relationship known to his uncle he is most affectionately received (5224 ff.), and his offer to represent his uncle in the defense of Queen Ginovere against Vallerîn is accepted.



Lanzelet appears in the rôle of adviser to his uncle (7026 ff.), and on another occasion when the nephew needs assistance, the uncle furnishes him with an army of three thousand knights and with ample supplies (8060 ff.).

Other epics, which, like the *Lanzelet*, belong to the Arthurian cycle and contain the uncle and nephew motif, are: *Wigalois*, *Daniel von dem blühenden Tal*, *Gârel*, *Die Krône der Abenteuer*, *Meleranz*, *Seifrid de Ardemont*, *Tandareis und Floridibel*, and *Wigamur*. Though these epics are under the influence of French sources or patterns, they show much original German invention. We shall consider them in order.

In the *Wigalois* we find a case of an uncle providing a husband for his niece by capture. The knight of the belt who early in the plot defeats Artûs' nephew Gâwein proves to be king of a distant land. He takes Gâwein home with him and gives him as husband to his *swester tochter* Flôrie (29, 17 ff.). After a half-year of married life Gâwein longs to see his kin and journeys to Karidol. There, even after his long absence, he finds his uncle Artûs standing before the castle door, mourning for his lost nephew (33, 32). Later in the story Wigalois, offspring of the marriage referred to, is rendered unconscious in a battle with a dragon. Struggling to recall his identity as his consciousness returns, he thinks first of his mother, then of his *ôheim* (here = mother's uncle) Jôram, and only last of his father (150, 30 ff.). Another nephew, Bejolarz, is identified as sister's son to Môrâl (223, 12 ff.), and has the assistance of his uncle in combat (258, 8 ff.).

In *Daniel von dem blühenden Tal* Artûs is surrounded as usual with various *neven*, Gâwein, Iwein, and Parzivâl, of whom only Gâwein is identified as sister's son. As elsewhere, Gâwein stands high in the counsel of his uncle, and is always the first to speak and advise (885 ff.; 6220 ff.; 6251 ff.). In the warfare against King Matûr the nephew also plays a prominent rôle. With Iwein and Parzivâl he constitutes the advance guard of the army (2853 ff.), and in the thick of the fight we find him at his uncle's side (3259 ff.).

It is significant that Gârel, in the epic of that name, identifies himself through a famous ancestor, his uncles, and his *mâge*, but not through his father (4176 ff.). In this epic again, Artûs is attended by a group of *neven*: Gârel, Gâwân, Lanzilet, Iwân, Erec, and Beakurs; but in no case is the degree of their relationship specified. Although some of them are according to tradition sisters' sons, we are not warranted in assuming that in the *Gârel* all of them bear this relation.<sup>95</sup> The pursuit of Artûs' wife, Ginover, who has been abducted by Meljacanz, is carried on by these *neven*, chief among them Gâwân. Artûs is filled with anxiety for their safety, and prays God to protect them (216 ff.). The relationship which is most strongly emphasized, however, in the *Gârel* is that between Gîlân and his sister's sons Alexander and Flôrîs. Gîlân, with whom Gârel has formed a friendship, recounts to the latter the capture of his sister's sons by Eskilabon, who holds them captive in his castle at Belamunt (2483 ff.). He is on his way to free them (2552 ff.; 2620 ff.). The mother of the captives is confident of a happy ending when her brother arrives (2810 ff.). After the defeat of Eskilabon there is a joyful reunion (4575 ff.).

In passing, it may also be noted that the dwarf Albewîn, whom Gârel liberates, and who presents the latter with a magic sword and ring, had received these precious possessions from his *oeheim* (6560 ff.).

<sup>95</sup> Chrestien mentions Gârel among Gâwein's brothers. The editor, Walz, in his synopsis (Ch. VII, p. 134; Ch. IX, p. 268) unhesitatingly calls Artûs and Gârel uncle and nephew, and Golther (*Die deutsche Dichtung im Mittelalter*, Stuttgart, 1912, 262) ascribes to them the same relationship. Now Artûs frequently addresses Gârel as *neve* (18567, 18853, 19284, 19963); he had reared him from his twelfth year on (4199 ff.), had knighted him and had presented him with an island (4213 ff.). But although the relationship appears externally to be that of uncle and nephew, it should be noted that the tone between the two remains formal, Gârel never addressing Artûs as *ôheim* but always as *Herr*; and that in identifying himself through his relatives Gârel names two *oeheim* (Gâhmuret and Gâlwes), but refers to Artûs, in contrast, only as his *mâg* (4176 ff.). It would appear, therefore, that although Artûs and Gârel are relatives, their kinship is less close than that between uncle and sister's son. There are other instances of Walz's too ready use of the equation *neve* = nephew. Thus he calls Klarîs Gârel's nephew, although it is clearly shown that he is the sister's son of Gârel's wife's mother, and thus a cousin of Gârel's wife; similarly he calls Ammilôt Ekunaver's nephew, whereas the two are only cousins (cf. 13701, 14141, 14591, 16896).

There are numerous references to uncles and nephews in the rambling and loosely woven plot of the *Krône der Abenteuer*. Foremost among these is Gâwein, who introduces himself as "*Artûs swester suon*" (21606). Various incidents evidence the closeness of the bond between uncle and nephew. Having witnessed Ginover's humiliation by Gasozein, the nephew confidently promises to restore her to his uncle's favor (11825 ff.). When the maid Sgoidamûr appeals to Artûs for a champion, she declares that she wants none other than his sister's son (12879 ff.). Dame Fortune, wishing to bestow the greatest measure of favor and happiness upon Gâwein, promises him that she will endow his uncle Artûs with permanent riches and power (15895 ff.). Gâwein's continued absence from court on adventures causes his uncle great concern; and when it is believed that he is dead, the grief of Artûs and his court is profound (16860 ff.; 21824 ff.). Having heard of this through his mother's aunt, the nephew sends a messenger, both to announce his safety to his uncle and to appeal to him for help in a pending battle with Gîremelanz. His wish is promptly fulfilled by Artûs, who shows exuberant joy at the news of his nephew's safety:

21940           Die rede der bot niht vol gesprach:  
                   Der kûnec die abe brach,  
                   Von dem stuol er von vrôuden spranc,  
                   Disen knappen gar sunder dane  
                   Kuste er mê wan drîzec stunt,  
                   Und tet im grôze vrôude kunt.

Gâwein has obligated himself to undertake the dangerous quest of the grail, which is held to mean certain death. Artûs declares to his followers:

25759           Ir herren, swaz mir ie geschach  
                   Leides, daz was ein niht  
                   Wider dise schedilîch geschicht,  
                   Diu mir nû ist geschehen,  
                   Als ir alle habet gesehen.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

25784           Swie ez Gâwein ergêht,  
                   Alsô muoz ez mir ergên;  
                   Ich wil die reise bestên

Mit Gâwein: des ist niht rât.  
 Unser ietweder den andern lât  
 In deheiner nôt belîben,  
 Die er mac vertrîben,  
 Und dâ im helfebaere  
 Der ander waere  
 Oder iemer sîn möhte;  
 Ob ez im alsô töhte,  
 Daz waere gar unwendic.  
 Gît Gelücke uns beiden sie,  
 Dêswar, daz ist sunder nît;  
 Swelhme einem ez in gît,  
 Des hât der ander kleinen haz;  
 Waz töhte zwein gesellen baz?  
 Swelher aber in der nôt  
 Bestât, sô ist der ander tôt,  
 Swie verre er waere von im.  
 Dar umbe ich mir die reise nim.  
 Ich enwil nimmer âne in  
 Vröuden pflegen, obe ich bin.  
 Sît er dar sol, ich muoz dâ hin.

It is only with the greatest difficulty that the united opposition of Artûs' knights and of Gâwein himself restrains Artûs from accompanying his nephew; and there is boundless rejoicing on the part of the uncle and his court when Gâwein returns safe and successful (29766 ff.).

Another maternal uncle, Gansguoter, appears in the rôle of provider and guardian for his sister's daughters (13038 ff.). Among those who come to a tournament at the castle of Sorgardâ is Laamez von Babilon, accompanied by his sister's son Aschalonê (18051 ff.). They fight side by side in the tournament (18343 ff.), and the nephew, deeply pained at his uncle's defeat, tries, though in vain, to avenge him (18457 ff.).

Pleier's poem, *Meleranz*, presents us with a good case of uncle and sister's son. The youthful Meleranz has heard of his famous uncle Artûs since earliest childhood (181 ff.). Feeling irresistibly drawn to him, he leaves home secretly, and, arriving at Artûs' court incognito, finds a place in his uncle's following. The bereaved mother, in her distress over the disappearance of her son, turns to her distant brother Artûs for help, whereupon

Artûs suspects that his strange young guest may be the missing nephew. Having identified him as such, he greets him most affectionately and tells him that all he has is at his disposal (2370 ff.). He has no thought of allowing his nephew to return to his mother with the messenger whom she had sent. It is significant that in his opinion their relationship accords to his sister's son the rights which we would expect his own son to have, and that the father receives so little consideration:

2468                    nu bin ich inne worden rehte  
                         daz er ist mîner swester sun.  
                         wil ich der sippe nu rehte tuon,  
                         sô sol er gewaltic sîn  
                         über al in dem lande mîn,  
                         reht als gewalteclîche  
                         als dâ heim in Franken rîche.  
                         nu sage ouch mîner swester daz  
                         si sül ez lâzen âne haz,  
                         ich welle in hie bî mir behalten.  
                         er sol gewalteclîchen walten  
                         al des ich in mîm lande hân.”

Artûs also insists that the nephew receive knighthood from his hands (2690 ff.); he arranges a great festival for the occasion, to which he invites his nephew's parents, and in Meleranz' honor uncle and father dub a hundred knights each to knighthood. Artûs' concern for his nephew's safety is indicated 3219 ff. and 10899 ff., and his delight at the latter's achievement in gaining Queen Tydomîe's hand 10502 ff. Some time before the wedding, Tydomîe's maternal uncle, not knowing of her betrothal, attempts to dispose of her hand to his wife's brother. He goes so far in asserting his authority as to employ his army against his niece's land, claiming inheritance of the land from his sister (7715 ff.; 10950 ff.; 11646 ff.). But he really desires only his niece's welfare, and when he learns that she is betrothed to the sister's son of Artûs, he becomes reconciled. He sees in her his child, and she in him her father:

12710                    ze sîner nifteln giene er sâ,  
                         mit armen er si umbevie.  
                         er sprach “niftel, ob dir ie



von mir dehein leit geschach  
 oder daz du hetest für ungemach,  
 daz soltu, frowe, mir vergeben.  
 die wil wir beide mügen leben,  
 wil ich dichs ergetzen sô  
 daz du des wirst von herzen frô.  
 ich hân niht kindes mê dan dîn.  
 allez daz dâ heizet mîn,  
 daz sol dir wesen undertân,  
 dir und Meleranz dînem man.”  
 diu kûngîn sprach “oeheim mîn,  
 ich hân vil gern die hulde dîn,  
 wan ich niht mêre trôstes hân  
 wan dich und mînen lieben man  
 den mir got hât gegeben.  
 an iu beiden stêt mîn leben.  
 herzenlieber oeheim mîn,  
 du muost mîn trôst mîn vater sîn.”  
 “daz tuon ich gerne sicherlich.”  
 also sprach der künic rîch.

In *Seyfrid de Ardemont* the hero secretly leaves home in order to join his maternal uncle Gâban at the court of King Artûs. During the various adventures which he encounters on the way, his uncle is the ideal of bravery which he holds up to himself for emulation (30, 1 ff.). Arriving before Karidol, Seyfrid pitches his tent and defeats successively fourteen knights of the round table. As the fifteenth, Gâban, rides out to do battle, Seyfrid learns that he is the uncle of whom he is so proud, turns aside from the shock of the lances, makes himself known, and is joyfully welcomed by his uncle (61, 1 ff.). Soon after, Seyfrid is knighted by Artûs, his maternal uncle's maternal uncle, whom he addresses as *ôhaim*, and of whom he now begs permission to go and champion the oppressed maid Condiflor. Although apprehensive, the relatives are nevertheless at last constrained to grant the request; Gâban arms his nephew with his own hands (91, 1 ff.) and is later notified of the latter's victory by a special messenger (192, 5).

As in the preceding epics, so again in *Tandareis und Flordibel* Artûs is surrounded by his *neven* Gâwân and Lanzilet, Êric and Iwân, Bêâcurs and Melianz. The hero Tandareis is the son of

Queen Genover's *oheim* (670 ff.). When Tandareis is banished by Artûs for his elopement with Flordibel, he turns first of all to his mother's brother Vergulaht (4092 ff.). The runaway couple, seeking reconciliation with Artûs, choose his favorite nephew Gâwân as intermediary, who, confident of his influence, promises his assistance (3106 ff.), and with respectful boldness expresses to his uncle his disapproval of the latter's attitude (8227 ff.). After obtaining the king's forgiveness, Tandareis asks him to honor the two girls who have competed for his hand against Flordibel and have lost. Artûs complies in the case of Antonî by giving his *swester sun* Bêâcurs to her in marriage. The latter is not consulted as to his own desires, but yields submissively to this disposal of his affections (16408 ff.). Three successive times Antonî expresses her sense of the great honor thus shown her (16585 ff.; 17232 ff.; 17377 ff.). Finally, attention may be called to the loving relation between Dulcemâr and Genovêr, who are *oeheim* and *niftel* (17286 ff.).

The *Willehalm von Orlens* presents a sister's son in Vilippe, who is identified through his maternal uncle Willehalm (156 ff.). There is trouble between Willehalm and Joffrit. Although King Vilippe, nephew to the former and cousin to the latter, holds himself aloof from the quarrel while it lasts, he is deeply grieved when his uncle is slain in battle (1762 ff.). It is with difficulty that Joffrit exculpates himself with King Vilippe, by an oath that he is personally innocent of Willehalm's death (2373 ff.). The plot also mentions Coradis, who, gathering his relatives to wage battle against King Witekin, receives the assistance of his sister's son Gillamur (10830 ff.). King Amelot and Willehalm II, battling against King Alan of Ireland, capture the latter's sister's son. This is represented as the crowning feature of the enemy's discomfiture (12128 ff.).

The heroine of the *Demantîn*, Bêâmunt, is identified through her maternal uncle, whose heir she is (317 ff.). Upon the death of Bêâmunt's father, a suitor, Firganant, tries to gain possession of her hand by violence. Her relatives thereupon arrange a tournament, at which she is to be awarded to the knight who

successfully defends her. Her uncle, the King of England, journeys to Erramôn to attend the tournament, and expresses his joy that she is to be defended by Demantin, upon whom he confidently relies for the defeat of Firganant (396 ff.). There being no other quarters available for the newly arrived Demantin, the king gives up his own rooms to accommodate his niece's champion. After Firganant's defeat by Demantin, the uncle, according to promise, awards his niece to the victor. But Demantin in turn gives Bêamunt to Firganant, and after the wedding the uncle and his wife renounce their crowns in favor of their niece and her husband (1540 ff.). Various other uncles and nephews receive mention in the plot. We are told, in a matter-of-course way, that Onyphant is determined to avenge the defeat of Fortasîn because he is the latter's uncle (1714 ff.). When Demantin slays King Eghart's cupbearer, the latter's nephew is the first to take up the pursuit for revenge (4075 ff.). And Watsêr, twice identified through his uncle (9839 ff.; 10898 ff.), is prominent in the relief party which goes to the latter's assistance. Much of the action of the epic *Mai und Beafloer* centers in the nephew Mai and his maternal uncle, the King of Spain. Mai's mother, Eliacha, opposing her son's marriage to the foundling Beafloer, declares that she will report the matter to her brother, Mai's uncle (68, 27 ff.). Mai's followers, too, recognize the authority of the uncle, who, as they say, expects great things of his nephew (73, 42 ff.). Mai carries out his marriage plans despite all adverse counsel. The attitude of the uncle toward the union is not brought out. Shortly after, a messenger arrives bringing rich gifts from the uncle (98, 4 ff.) and a message appealing to the nephew's *triwe* for the aid which the latter owes him in the war with the heathen, who are about to fall upon his land:

99, 26

“er weiz wol, daz ir sît getriu:  
des mant iuch mîn herre  
iwer genâden verre  
und wes ir im schuldîe sît,  
daz ir im komt an den strît,  
daz ir iuwer triwe gehûget  
und komet im sô ir beste mûget.”

Mai replies with a prompt assent and likewise sends costly presents (104, 5 ff.). When the messenger returns, the uncle sends to Mai a costly tent, fine Spanish horses, and supplies, to insure his comfort on his way to Spain (109, 23 ff.). The meeting of uncle and nephew is a most affectionate one (110, 8 ff.). When the heathen army approaches so near that it is necessary to send out pickets, Mai beseeches his uncle for the honor of that duty (112, 23 ff.). The uncle is reluctant on account of the danger involved, but finally gives his consent. He furnishes the nephew with a guard of five hundred knights, whom he charges to serve and protect Mai better than if he himself were present (112, 39 ff.). Mai and his troops win in the first contest with the enemy, and the uncle is proud of his nephew's prowess (117, 9 ff.). In the ensuing battle the king intrusts Mai with the leadership of the first of his five army divisions (119, 14 ff.), and to Mai falls the credit for complete victory over the heathen. The king does his utmost to induce his nephew to remain with him permanently, offering him the regency over a vast territory; but Mai, while assuring his uncle that he is ready to serve him unto death, declines all rewards (125, 26 ff.). The king detains him as long as possible (126, 19 ff.), and when at last he must accede to parting, he is unable to restrain his tears; he would give half his possessions to keep Mai with him (127, 2 ff.). 127, 21 indicates the nephew's expectation of inheriting the uncle's wealth and possessions.

In the *Engelhart*, as in *Herzog Ernst* and *Tristan und Isolt*, we find a jealous nephew. Two youths, Dietrich and Engelhart—in particular the latter—arouse the jealousy of King Fruote's sister's son Ritschier, when they find favor in the king's sight (1664 ff.). The king plans an elaborate celebration for the knighting of his sister's son, at the same time giving the sword to thirty youths in his nephew's honor, among them Engelhart (2434 ff.). The jealous nephew soon finds a weapon with which to attack his rival in the king's affections. Engelhart has won the love of the king's daughter Engeltrut, and shortly after the tournament the nephew by chance discovers the two in loving

embrace (3276 ff.). Losing no time in bearing this tale to his uncle, Ritschier pushes unannounced into the latter's bedchamber. The king is deeply shaken at the news, but when Engelhart denies the accusation and demands trial by ordeal, the king, for the sake of his daughter's honor, permits the combat. To avoid defeat due to his guilt, Engelhart is represented in the ordeal by his innocent and faithful double, Dietrich, who defeats Ritschier, cutting off his hand, and is about to kill him, when the uncle interferes to save his nephew's life (4954 ff.). The nephew is completely disgraced, but the daughter of the king is vindicated and is given in marriage to Engelhart.

The opening of the narrative in *Partonopier und Meliur* finds the youthful hero living with his maternal uncle, King Clogiers, who has fostered his nephew from earliest childhood (256 ff.). The uncle prizes this nephew above all riches (309 ff.), "*das er allez golt für in niht enhet genomen.*" On a hunt one day with his uncle, the thirteen-year-old Partonopier kills a ferocious wild boar, to the intense delight of his uncle and his followers, who rejoice in his prowess (388 ff.). The dogs, warmed to the chase and excited by this prey, pass out of control, and Partonopier rides after them to bring them back. His horse becoming exhausted, however, he is overtaken by the fall of night, and remains lost in the forest. The anxious uncle conducts a search until darkness forces him to desist. Coming to the sea in the night, the lost nephew crawls aboard a boat, and is frightened the following morning to find himself adrift. Anticipating death, the youth grieves,

744

wan ich beschouwe niemer mê  
den oeheim und die muoter mîn.

Although the father is alive (cf. 2848 ff.), it is of his uncle and his mother that the youth thinks; later passages confirm us in the belief that this is by no means accidental. The boat having drifted to a strange land, Partonopier spends a year with the enchanted Queen Meliur as her lover, but is then overcome by a longing to visit his homeland to see his uncle and his mother:



- 2722           ûf sînes werden vater lant  
               wart sîn herze dô verdâht  
               und ûf sô vesten willen brâht,  
               daz er niht lâzen wolte,  
               swaz im dar umbe solte  
               und sîner frouwen hie geschehen,  
               sîn ouge wolte dort besehen  
               den künic, sînen oeheim.
- 2738           swie manievalt hie waere,  
               sîn liebe, fröude und sîn gemach,  
               doch jâmert in, daz er niht sach  
               den oehein und die muoter sîn.
- 2796           mîn lant, mîn guot, mîn êre,  
               den oehein und die muoter mîn  
               saehe ich gerne, möhte ez sîn.

Except in the rather impersonal phrase *sînes werden vater lant* Partonopier's father is nowhere alluded to until Meliur, granting her lover permission to visit his home, informs him that both his uncle and his father have died (2846 ff.). His mourning at this sad news is described in 2972 ff., 3026 ff. It appears as though the death of the uncle were forgotten in the long sequel, for the mode of address appropriate between the old king and Partonopier, '*neve*' and '*oheim*,' is retained in the intercourse between the young king and the hero, though they are but cousins. The use of *oheim* might be considered as merely complimentary; besides, both terms may mean simply 'relative,' especially in address. But the fact that the cousins bear as sentimental a relation to each other as did the real uncle and his sister's son, and the further fact that so late in the poem as line 16700, long after the death of the uncle, Partonopier is identified as the king's<sup>96</sup> sister's son, make it appear probable that we have to do with an oversight on the part of the poet.

A brother's son (3726 ff.) and numerous sister's sons of minor importance occur in the poem. The Saracen king, Sornaguir, who attacks the young king, Partonopier's cousin, with an army, is accompanied by his sister's son Fursîn. When a recon-

<sup>96</sup> This may, indeed, refer to either the old or the new king, but appears to refer to the latter.

ciliation between the foes takes place, Sornagiur cements the peace by leaving this sister's son with Partonopier to be educated (6505 ff.). Although Fursîn's father is living (9899), the youth is identified through his maternal uncle only (*Sornagiures swester kint*, 9902), and the control of his education and career is entirely in the hands of this uncle.

At Meliur's tournament, the King of Sîrî is accompanied by a sister's son, whose unhorsing by Partonopier the uncle promptly endeavors to avenge (15848 ff.). Similarly, in 19043 ff., an uncle engages in hot combat with Alîse for the purpose of avenging the slaying of his sister's son (20546 ff.).

We have in the *Wigamur* an interesting case where equal rights of succession to their nephew's crown and land is ascribed to uncles on both sides of the family, assuming that *oheim* as used in 3521, 3666, and *vetter* in 3526, 3666 have their predominant meanings of maternal and paternal uncle respectively. Amilos, King of Deleferant, dies without direct heirs. The right of succession and inheritance is claimed by both the maternal uncle (*öheim*) Atroclas, King of Herat, and the paternal uncle (*vetter*) King Paltriot (3519, 3664). The author pronounces the two uncles to have equal rights (3502), and puts a similar sentiment into the mouth of the hero, Wigamur, who wanders upon the scene at this juncture. Nevertheless, Wigamur decides to champion the cause of Atroclas, the maternal uncle, against his own (to him unknown) father, and is about to engage in single combat with the latter. But Paltriot, being a king and unwilling to fight with a man of unknown station, requires to know Wigamur's identity, and thus finds in him the son stolen from him in infancy. The father, making himself known as such, at once points out the boy's maternal uncle Agrasyn, who is with him (4152 ff.). A complete reconciliation takes place between Paltriot and his opponent Atroclas by the giving of the latter's daughter to Wigamur. It is not the father but the maternal uncle who hastens ahead of the army and leads the long-lost son home to his mother, sending a courier in advance of their arrival to announce the happy tidings (4237 ff.). In another passage

in this epic, King Marroch, who is trying to obtain the hand of Queen Ysope by force and who has already done her great harm, also invades the land of her natural protector, her uncle (2766).

In the *Apollonius von Tyrland* the hero discovers in his opponent Absolon the son of his *oheim* Julian, after whom he calls him "*Du Julianes kindt*," and with whom he then pledges comradeship. Apollonius fights to avenge his niece Pallas, whose voice spurs him on to victory (19490 ff.). King Candor gives his niece in marriage (12920). When Apollonius arrives at Ninive, where his maternal uncle is Sultan, the latter gives him a warm welcome, ministers in every possible way to his comfort (10326 ff.), and thanks God for his nephew's safe arrival,

10338

"Wan er was sîner swester sun."

In the *Athis und Prophlias* an uncle serves as bodyguard to his niece Gâytin (A, 435, 1, 118 ff.).

In *Flôre und Blanscheflûr* the hero Flôre is sent to his maternal aunt Sybille (1404 ff.), and inherits lands from his uncle 340 ff.).

In *Friedrich von Schwaben*, the hero, forced to part with his beloved Angelburg because he has violated her injunction by striking a light to see her in the night, refers to the grief of Willehalm and Karl at the loss of their nephews, in order to indicate the poignancy of his own grief at the loss of Angelburg (1505, 1513).

In the *Gute Frau* the King of Spain is aided by his nephew in his war with the Graf von Poitouwe. When the nephew is defeated and captured, the king has to pay heavy ransom (918 f.).

In *Heinrich und Kunigunde*, Bishop Brûn lays false claim to the Bishopric of Babenberg in order to bestow it on his sister's son (2555 ff.). Queen Kunigunde fosters her niece, a sister's daughter, from earliest infancy (3575).

In the *Lohengrin*, a *neve* succeeds Kaiser Otto to the crown (7521 ff.), and there is a passing reference (7547) to another uncle and his sister's son.

In *Ludwigs des Frommen Kreuzfahrt*, King Baldwin deeply loves his sister's son Wilhalm, whom he makes king of Tripoli (381 ff.).

In the *Treue Hausfrau*, the knight who leaves his wife to engage in combat and is disfigured by the loss of an eye, is accompanied by a sister's son (132, 95 f.), who bears the message between the knight and his wife that leads to their reunion.

There is an uncle with his sister's sons in the *Valentin und Namelos*, but the relationship is not emphasized.

Finally, in the *Wilhelm von Österreich*, Gaylet mourns the loss of his uncle Gahmuret (14097 ff.).

### III. HISTORICAL EVIDENCE, AND THE VIEWPOINT OF PHILOLOGY

In Germanic history as well as in the literature survivals of early matriliney are to be found. Tacitus records a quarrel over succession between an uncle, the Quadic chief Vannius, and his sister's sons Vangio and Sido.<sup>97</sup> In another chapter we have referred to the testimony of Tacitus as to the high position of the Teuton woman. The description which he gives of the daily life of the Teutons is likewise interesting. He tells us<sup>98</sup> that during the intervals of war they passed some of their time in hunting, but most of it in repose divided between sleeping and eating. The warriors committed the care of the house, the family affairs, and the lands to the women, old men, and weaker members of the household, while they themselves lived in dull indolence. These conditions are strongly suggestive of those which prevailed among the American Indians in conjunction with matriliney in a highly developed form; the striking parallel is noted and repeatedly commented upon in the Oxford translation of Tacitus.<sup>99</sup> Speaking of the Teutons in battle, Tacitus tells

<sup>97</sup> *Annal.*, Liber XII, C. XXX.

<sup>98</sup> *Germ.*, C. 15. Cf. Caesar, *B. G.*, 4, 1; 6, 21.

<sup>99</sup> Notes, pp. 287, 305, 342.

us that their military formations (*turma aut cuneus*) were made up of families and clans.<sup>100</sup> There is evidence that the first permanent or semi-permanent settlements of the *Germanen* were made by family groups (the *fara*), the members of which were conscious of their common descent.<sup>101</sup> The historian Lamprecht holds that these kin groups were originally matrilineal units which survived as *Hundertschaften* because of their tactical significance in the army.<sup>102</sup>

By far the most direct historical evidence which we possess is the famous statement of Tacitus (*Germ.*, XX) that the uncle-nephew tie among the Teutons was equally close, if not closer, than the tie between father and son: "*Sorum filiis idem apud avunculum qui apud patrem honor. Quidam sanctiorem arctioremque hunc nexum sanguinis arbitrantur et in accipiendis obsidibus magis exigunt, tamquam ii et animum firmitus et domum latius teneant. Heredes tamen successoresque sui cuique liberi; et nullum testamentum. Si liberi non sunt, proximus gradus in possessione fratres, patruī, avunculi.*"<sup>103</sup> It will be noted that inheritance was no longer through the female line, but was from father to son or to the nearest paternal relatives. Already in Tacitus' time, then, the relationship of the maternal uncle to his nephew remained only a matter of sentiment in the minds and customs of the people. As Gummere says:<sup>104</sup> "When one set of laws . . . must give place to another set, the former passes into communal sentiment," lingering finally as an apparently unintelligible, abnormal, or incongruous custom.

<sup>100</sup> *Germ.*, C. 7.

<sup>101</sup> R. Schröder: *Lehrbuch der d. Rechtsgesch.*, Leipzig, 1898, 16.

<sup>102</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, 103, 128; cf. Schröder: *op. cit.*, 16-18; Brunner, *Deutsche Rechtsgesch.*, I, 84 ff.

<sup>103</sup> "Children are regarded with equal affection by their maternal uncles as by their fathers; some even consider this as a more sacred bond of consanguinity and prefer it in the requisition of hostages, as if it held the mind by a firmer tie, and the family by a more extensive obligation. A person's own children, however, are his heirs and successors; and no wills are made. If there be no children, the next in order of inheritance are brothers, paternal and maternal uncles." Oxford Translation, London, 1901, II, 311. For comment, cf. Müllenhoff: *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, IV, Berlin, 1900, 321.

<sup>104</sup> *Op. cit.*, 135.



Despite the emphasis which has always been laid upon the purity of the marriage relation with the Teutons there are, as Weinhold<sup>105</sup> and Dargun<sup>106</sup> show, ample traces of an early promiscuity which is typical of primitive peoples; and this often has a connection with the tracing of descent in the female line.

From the beginning of the historical period early Germanic law recognizes relationship with and through the father as well as the mother. In general the agnatic relatives enjoy the advantage over the cognatic. Nevertheless there remain, as a legacy from prehistoric days, plain traces of the opposite system.<sup>107</sup> Of peculiar interest is the *Lex Salica*, the earliest legal document of the salic Franks. Characterized not only by its antiquity, but also by its comparative freedom from Roman influence, the *Lex Salica* shows a recognition of the female line which amounts, in certain respects, to a preference. Thus the famous passage "*de chrenecruda*" (*Tit.*, LVIII) specifies that a murderer who is not able to pay the necessary *wergeld* shall call upon his relatives by means of the symbolic rite of casting a handful of earth upon them—first upon the nearest and then upon the more remote relatives—and names after the parents and brothers the relatives on the mother's side, making no reference to the paternal kin: "*Quod si jam pater aut mater seu frater pro ipso solverunt, super sororem tunc matris aut super ejus filios debet illam terram jacitare.*"<sup>108</sup> Later versions, toward the end of the 6th century, include a mention of the paternal relatives, but only after the maternal kin.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, the oldest versions of *Tit.* 59 provide that the movable property (*fahrende Habe*) of a deceased person without children shall pass to his mother or eventually to her (preferably female) relatives. There is much dispute concerning these passages,<sup>110</sup> but competent authorities are of the opinion

<sup>105</sup> *Die d. Frauen*, II, 12 ff.

<sup>106</sup> *Mutterrecht*, 43 ff.

<sup>107</sup> Amira: *Grundriss d. germ. Rechts*, Strassburg, 1913, 169.

<sup>108</sup> Grimm: *Ra.*, I, 111.

<sup>109</sup> Heinr. Geffcken: *Lex Sal.*, Leipzig, 1898, 58. Cf. Amira: *Erbenfolge und Verwandtschaftsgliederung nach den altniederd. Rechten*, München, 1874, 61.

<sup>110</sup> Brunner: *Op. cit.*, I, 79 ff.; Delbrück: *Mutterrecht bei den Idg.*, Preussische Jahrbücher, lxxix, 1895, 22 ff.

that they can only be matrilineal survivals, residual matrilineal rights in the midst of an opposed system.<sup>111</sup> Amira points out the prominence of the mother's brother in early Low German law, saying: "*Die geschichtliche Bedeutsamkeit dieser Tatsachen wird erhört durch die bekannten Angaben des Tacitus über den 'sanctior arctiorque nexus' zwischen dem Mutterbruder und den Schwesterkindern.*"<sup>112</sup> And he even finds historical evidence of inheritance from the uncle by the nephew in the transmission of certain offices."<sup>113</sup> Contact with the highly patriarchal civilization of the Romans accelerated the obsolescence of matrilineal conditions with the Teutons. The farther north we go the longer these conditions lingered. Chadwick asserts: "There seems to be no evidence for believing that a purely agnatic system ever prevailed in the North, while the further we go back in native tradition the more prominent become the traces of the opposite system."<sup>114</sup>

The oldest of the Danish historians, Saxo Grammaticus, indicates cases of succession through the sister's son among the early Danish kings;<sup>115</sup> and "when we get back of the 8th century in Scandinavia," says Chadwick, "we constantly find the kingdom passing to daughters' sons and even to daughters' husbands."<sup>116</sup> It seems by no means improbable that Beowulf's expected succession to the throne of his maternal uncle Hygelac rests upon an historical basis.

It is impossible to recapitulate here, even most briefly, the evidence which many writers have offered of earlier matriliney among the various peoples of the Indo-European race. Historians, sociologists, archaeologists, and jurists of repute accept the view that there was a stage of matriliney in the development of the Indo-Europeans. Leading philologists, however, stand out

<sup>111</sup> Perhaps the most detailed treatment is that of Dargun: *Mutterrecht*, 60 ff. See also Lamprecht: *Festgabe für Georg Haussen, zum 31. Mai, 1889*, Tübingen, 1880; Heusler: *Institut.*, II, 522; Chadwick: *Orig. of the Eng. N.*, 327 ff.

<sup>112</sup> Amira: *Erbenfolge*, 210.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>114</sup> *Op. cit.*, 334.

<sup>115</sup> Tr. by Etton, VII, 260, 336.

<sup>116</sup> *Op. cit.*, 332.

in persistent refusal to accept such a theory; for these Delbrück<sup>117</sup> and Schröder<sup>118</sup> are the chief spokesman. Their argument is that whereas there are primitive Indo-European kinship terms expressing the relation between the wife and the husband's family, there are none for the relationship between a young man and the members of his wife's family; and that this fact indicates that the wife left her relatives and disappeared in the house of her husband, the *Sippe* of the wife being perhaps friendly, but not related, and the family organization being strictly of the patriarchal type. As increasingly settled conditions brought about a closer union of the maternal and paternal kinship groups, the maternal uncle gained a more favorable position than the paternal uncle because he stood as a friendly protector outside the relation of authority of the father and his house. Dargun,<sup>119</sup> by strong argument, fairly maintains the matrilineal viewpoint against the philologists. It is important to bear in mind that the linguistic evidence is purely negative, being based upon the absence of certain common terms for relationship in the Indo-European languages. Furthermore, philologists themselves caution us as to the finality of their own evidence. Thus Hirt, although he agrees in the main with Delbrück,<sup>120</sup> says: "*Im allgemeinen gehen die Verwandtschaftsnamen auf das Verhältnis der Frau zu den Angehörigen des Mannes und der Kinder zu den Verwandten des Vaters, aber die Annahme ist falsch, dass das Verhältnis des Mannes zu den Angehörigen der Frau, das der Kinder zu den mütterlichen Verwandten nicht bezeichnet worden wäre. Erstlich haben wir tatsächlich Wörter, die dies Verhältnis bezeichnen, und zweitens können wir aus dem Schweigen der Sprache nichts schliessen. Die Sprachen, die bis zum heutigen Tage die idg. Verwandtschaftsnamen, und die Völker, die auch die alten Formen der Familien z. T. auf das beste bewahrt haben, die Litauer und die Slaven, kennen auch eine wohl ausgebildete*

<sup>117</sup> *Mutterrecht bei den Idg.*, 17 ff.; also *Die Idg. Verwandtschaftsnamen*.

<sup>118</sup> *Reallexicon*, s. v. *Familie*, 213 ff. Cf. also his *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*, 2. Aufl., Jena, 1890, 533 ff.; and Hirt: *Die Idg.*, II, 409.

<sup>119</sup> *Familienrecht*, 86 ff.

<sup>120</sup> *Die Idg.*, 704 ff.

*Benennung der Angehörigen der Frau in ihrem Verhältnis zu dem Schwiegersohn.*"<sup>121</sup> He concludes: "*Was wir aus diesen Tatsachen entnehmen können ist sehr wenig und im wesentlichen nur negativ. Es weist in ihnen nichts auf eine Mutterfolge hin. Eine Vaterfolge wird durch diese Ausdrücke nicht erwiesen.*"<sup>122</sup> In other words, the most that can be said against the matrilineal theory even from the philological viewpoint is that the question is still an open one.

But the matrilineal survivals among the Teutons need not of necessity find explanation in an Indo-European origin. There is an alternate possibility: that the matrilineal tendencies of the early Teutons were contracted in their contact with the non-Indo-European inhabitants of Europe. The foremost upholder of this view is Bernhöft.<sup>123</sup> That there is indubitable evidence of such matrilineal peoples in Europe even the philologists seem ready to concede. Let us quote them briefly, as the most conservative group. Shrader remarks: "*Es sind aber Spuren vorhanden, die es als wahrscheinlich erscheinen lassen, dass die vorindogermanische Bevölkerung Europas oder Teile derselben unter Mutterrecht standen. . . . An der Richtigkeit dieser Ausführungen kann nach den beigebrachten Zeugnissen ein Zweifel nicht bestehen.*"<sup>124</sup> Hirt likewise declares the evidence to be beyond doubt.<sup>125</sup>

The primitive, non-Indo-European population bordering on the Mediterranean, in Asia Minor, Africa, and Southern Europe were matrilineal. There is clear evidence of matrilineal conditions among the Locrians and the Etruscans.<sup>126</sup> In the extreme west were the Iberians, to whom Strabo (3, p. 165) attributes matrilineal practices; among the Basks, according to Hirt, "*herrscht noch heute die Vererbung durch die älteste Tochter,*

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Hoffmann: *Op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>122</sup> *Die Idg.*, 706.

<sup>123</sup> *Zur Gesch. des europ. Familienrechts*, Z. f. vergl. R., VIII, 233.

<sup>124</sup> *Reallex.*, s. v. *Mutterrecht*, 564 ff.

<sup>125</sup> *Die Idg.*, II, 410.

<sup>126</sup> Bachofen: *Mutterrecht*, Basel, 1897, 309 ff.; McLennan: *Studies in Anc. Hist.*, London, 1896; see ch., "Kinship in Anc. Greece." Hartland: *Prim. Society*, London, 1921, 124.



die ihren Geschwistern Unterhaltungsgelder geben muss. . . . Man wird wohl anführen dürfen, dass auf den Balearen die Frau in hoher Wertschätzung stand."<sup>127</sup> In the British Isles the pre-Indo-European population was likewise matrilineally organized. The evidence, first established by H. Zimmer,<sup>128</sup> is accepted as conclusive by Hirt,<sup>129</sup> Schrader,<sup>130</sup> and Delbrück.<sup>131</sup> Hirt says: "*Bei den Resten der vorarischen Urbevölkerung Britanniens bestand das Mutterrecht (besser die Mutterfolge) in voller Geltung; es regelte die Erbfolge noch Jahrhunderte, als die Pikten längst christianisiert und sprachlich keltisiert waren. Die Frauen nahmen nicht etwa eine besonders hohe Stellung ein, im Gegenteil; nirgends herrscht eine Frau.*"<sup>132</sup> Die Mutter, also die Geburt, bestimmt aber die Stammzugehörigkeit, das Erbrecht. Auf einen Piktenherrscher und seine Brüder folgt nicht etwa der Sohn des ältesten, sondern der Sohn der Schwester; auf diesen und seine eventuellen Brüder von Mutterseits folgt wieder ein Schwestersohn, u. s. w." In Scotland, Chadwick tells us,<sup>133</sup> paternal succession was not introduced into the royal family until the 9th century, and in Ireland, too, there are distinct historical traces of matrilineal succession.

It is clear, then, that we have, over against the theory of Indo-European matriliney, the alternative of influence by aboriginal matrilineal peoples. But these alternatives are, of course, not mutually exclusive; outside influences may have strengthened existing matrilineal conditions or survivals among the Indo-Europeans.

<sup>127</sup> *Die Idg.*, II, 419.

<sup>128</sup> *Zeitschr. der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgesch.*, XV, *Rom. Abt.*, 209.

<sup>129</sup> *Die Idg.*, II, 419.

<sup>130</sup> *Reallex.*, s. v. *Mutterrecht*, 565.

<sup>131</sup> *Mutterr. bei den Idg.*, 19; cf. Chadwick: *Op. cit.*, 341 ff.; Feist: *Idg.*, 116 ff.

<sup>132</sup> The Britons admitted the sovereignty of women; in the 1st century Cartismandua was queen of the Brigantes and Boadicea was queen of the Iceni. The latter not only combined royal and priestly functions but also led the army of her people against the Romans (Holmes: *Ancient Britain*, 268, 297).

<sup>133</sup> *Op. cit.*, 331.



## CONCLUSION

The tendencies which we have observed in the medieval German epic seem explicable only in terms of the matrilineal theory. The strength of the evidence from the epics lies not only in its own consistency but also in its perfect coherence with the great mass of evidence available from other sources. The chief evidence which the epics present is of course the prominence of the avunculate. But the evidence afforded by the close association of the uncle and the sister's son is corroborated by what we find with respect to the other family relationships in the epic. It is maintained by some<sup>134</sup> that the closeness of the uncle-nephew tie is not always of necessity a survival of matriliney, but is explicable on other natural grounds, such as the protection of the wife and children against the arbitrary will of the husband (father), or representation of the interests of the children against the interests of the family of the father. Furthermore, when the father is dead, the mother would naturally, even in a patrilineal society, turn to her own brother for advice and help rather than to a brother-in-law. And even with the father living, it would be natural that she should turn to the maternal uncle when he is more powerful and distinguished (Artūs) and can do more for the children than the father.

Now when we pass in review the cases of the avunculate found in the epics, we observe that instances of protection against the arbitrary will of the husband do not occur, and the same may be said of the defense of the children's interests against those of the paternal kin. In many cases the father is known to be dead, but while the mother's preference for her own brother is natural from the patrilineal viewpoint, the same cannot be said of her children as between the paternal and maternal uncle except upon the basis of the call of the blood. Looked at from the standpoint

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Delbrück: *Muttern. bei den Idg.*, 17 ff.; Schrader: *Reallex.*, s. v. *Familie*, 213 ff.; Weber: *Ehefrau und Mutter*, Tübingen, 1907, 26.

of the uncles, it is the *father's* brother who should be closer to his nephews in a strictly patrilineal society and who should be so viewed by them. Any emphasis of the tie between brother and sister and the latter's children on the one hand as against the tie between husband, wife, and children and the husband's kin on the other, is a matrilineal tendency at work in conflict with the patrilineal system.<sup>135</sup> Leaving out all cases in the epics where there are special reasons for the prominence of the maternal uncle, there remain frequent cases where the father is living and apparently on normal, affectionate terms with wife and children, and yet remains in the background, while the maternal uncle has charge or takes charge of the nephew and seems uppermost in the nephew's regard and affection; and the striking fact is that the epics present this relation as a matter of course, if they do not expressly refer to the maternal uncle's right and duty toward his nephew, and the rights and duties of the latter toward the former; in other words, the relation appears institutional, fixed by custom and tradition.

It is difficult to determine the extent of reciprocal influence between the Germans and the French. The possible influence of the imitation of French models is limited, however, to the age of chivalry; moreover, it is a question whether the influence was not originally the other way. It is now established that the French *Chansons de Geste* are of Germanic origin, and in his study of the avunculate in the *Chansons* Farnsworth concludes<sup>136</sup> that "the tradition of nephew-right must have come into the French from Germanic sources." In any case, the prominence of the avuncular relationship in the earliest, uninfluenced monuments of Germanic literature indicates that we have to do here with something which was indigenously Germanic, though paralleled in other countries<sup>137</sup> and, in German chivalric poetry, strengthened, but not essentially modified, by French concurrence.

Within German literature the influence of literary convention and tradition is large. It is the tendency of the later epics to

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Dargun: *Familienrecht*, 84.

<sup>136</sup> *Op. cit.*, 224.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Dargun: *Mutterrecht*, 76.

imitate earlier models and to emphasize conventional relationships. But the uncle-nephew motif extends from such early beginnings of Germanic legend through such varied periods of dissociated literary production that the factor of imitation is inadequate as an explanation. It can only be accounted for, especially in the light of external historical evidence, by primitive social conditions.<sup>138</sup> This factor of imitation or literary convention distorts the picture which the epics, studied in chronological sequence, would otherwise present; nevertheless, with the passing of time a change of viewpoint is discernible. Although the epics of the period of decadence make much of epic externals, and assemble and heap up the epic motifs of the preceding literary period, they introduce the brother's son with increasing frequency, as though there were a fading of the distinction between the mother's and the father's kin, and there is a growing irregularity in the use of relationship terms. The most concise evidence of an unconsciously shifting viewpoint is afforded us when it is possible to compare earlier with later versions in the historical development of one and the same epic. Lingering as a sentimental custom long after its basis in the social structure had passed away, the avunculate continued into the medieval period until finally obliterated by the paternal principle and the disappearance of the distinction between the maternal and paternal kin.

It remains a problem for the broadest investigation to determine to how remote a period this matrilineal stage should be assigned. Whether such survivals as have been mentioned go back to a common Indo-European period, or whether, as the philologists would have us believe, they result solely from the contraction of matrilineal tendencies from the pre-Indo-European population of Europe, cannot as yet be asserted with finality. But these are not mutually exclusive alternatives, and it is quite possible that surviving matrilineal tendencies among the Indo-Europeans were reinforced by contact with matrilineal aborigines.

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<sup>138</sup> Cf. Farnsworth: *Op. cit.*, 199.

## APPENDIX

### MEDIEVAL GERMAN EPICAL POEMS

#### ALEXANDER.

By Pfaffe Lamprecht, ed. by K. Kinzel, Halle, 1884.

(a) Strassburger Alexander.

7302 verses.

(b) Vorauer Alexander.

1533 verses.

#### ALEXANDERLIED.

By Rudolph von Ems, ed. by V. Junkt, *Beiträge zur Geschichte d. d. Sprache und Lit.*, XXIX, 369-470.

#### ALEXANDERLIED.

By Ulrich von Eschenbach, ed. by Wendelin Toischer, Tübingen, 1888.  
Stuttgart Lit. Verein, Vol. 183.

30,100 verses.

#### ALEXIUS.

By Konrad von Würzburg, ed. by R. Henzyski, Berlin, 1898. *Acta Germanica*, VI, 1.

1413 verses.

#### ALPHARTS TOD.

Ed. by Ernst Martin, Berlin, 1866. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 2.

1865 verses.

#### ANNOLIED.

Ed. by M. Rödiger, Mon. Germ., *Deutsche Chroniken*, Vol. 1, Pt. 2.  
Hannover, 1895.

878 verses.

#### ANTELAN.

Ed. by W. Scherer, *Zeitschrift f. d. Altertum*, Vol. 15, 140 ff.

132 verses.

#### APOLLONIUS VON TYRLAND.

By Heinrich von Neustadt, ed. by S. Singer, Berlin, 1906. *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, Vol. 7.

20,644 verses.

Der arme HEINRICH, *see under H.*

#### ATHIS und PROPHILIAS.

Ed. by W. Grimm, *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. 3, 212 ff. Berlin, 1883.

1401 verses.

#### BARLAAM und JOSAPHAT.

By Rudolph von Ems, ed. by F. Pfeiffer, Leipzig, 1843. *Dichtungen des Mittelalters*, Vol. 3.

16,184 verses.

BITEROLF und DIETLEIB.

Ed. by Oskar Jänicke, Berlin, 1866. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 1.  
13,500 verses.

Der CRANE.

By Berthold von Holle, ed. by K. Bartsch, Nürnberg, 1858.  
4919 verses.

DANIEL VON DEM BLÜHENDEN TAL.

By Der Stricker, ed. by G. Rosenhagen, Breslau, 1894. *Germ. Abhandl.*  
Vol. 9.  
8422 verses.

DARIFANT.

By Berthold von Holle, ed. by K. Bartsch, Nürnberg, 1858.  
265 verses.

DEMANTIN.

By Berthold von Holle, ed. by K. Bartsch, Tübingen, 1875. Stuttgart  
Lit. Verein, Vol. 123.  
11,761 verses.

DIETRICH und WENZELAN.

Ed. by Julius Zupitza, Berlin, 1870. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 5.  
510 verses.

DIETRICH'S FLUCHT.

Ed. by Ernst Martin, Berlin, 1866. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 2.  
10,152 verses.

ECKENLIED.

Ed. by Julius Zupitza, Berlin, 1870. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 5.  
3178 verses.

ENEIDE.

By Heinrich von Veldeke, ed. by Otto Behagel, Heilbronn, 1882.  
13,528 verses.

ENGELHARD.

By Konrad von Würzburg, ed. by M. Haupt, Leipzig, 1890.  
6504 verses.

ERACLIUS.

By Otte, ed. by H. Graef, Strassburg, 1883. *Quellen u. Forschungen*.  
Vol. 50.  
5392 verses.

EREC.

By Hartmann von Aue, ed. by M. Haupt, Leipzig, 1871.  
10,135 verses.

ERMENRICHS TOD.

Ed. by Th. Abelung, *Teutonia*, Heft. 7, Supplement, 57 ff., Leipzig, 1909.  
95 verses.

ERNST, see HERZOG ERNST.



FLORE und BLANSCHFLUR.

By Konrad Fleck, ed. by E. Sommer, Quedlenburg and Leipzig, 1846.  
8006 verses.

FLOS und BLANKEFLOS.

Ed. by O. Decker, Rostock i. M., 1913.  
1488 verses.

FRANCISKEN LEBEN, *see* SANKT FRANCISKEN LEBEN.

Die gute FRAU.

Ed. by E. Sommer, *Zeitschr. f. d. Altertum*, II, 385-481, Leipzig, 1841.  
3058 verses.

FRAUENDIENST.

By Ulrich von Lichtenstein, ed. by R. Bechstein, Leipzig, 1888.  
18,962 verses.

FRIEDRICH VON SCHWABEN.

Ed. by M. H. Jellinek, *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, Berlin, 1904,  
Vol. 1.  
8079 verses.

GAREL VON DEM BLÜHENDEN TAL.

By Der Pleier, ed. by M. Walz, Freiburg i. B., 1892.  
21,310 verses.

GAURIEL VON MUNTABEL *or* DER RITTER MIT DEM BOCK.

By Konrad von Stoffeln, ed. by F. Khull, Graz, 1885.  
4172 verses.

Der gute GERHART.

By Rudolf von Ems, ed. by M. Haupt, Leipzig, 1840.  
6928 verses.

GOLDEMAR.

Ed. by Julius Zupitza, Berlin, 1870. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 5.  
120 verses.

GRAF RUDOLF.

Ed. by W. Grimm, Göttingen, 1844.  
28 pp. of fragments.

GREGORIUS.

By Hartmann von Aue, ed. by Hermann Paul, Halle a. S., 1900.  
4006 verses.

Die GUTE FRAU, *see under* F.

Der GUTE GERHART, *see under* G.

GUDRUN, *see under* K.

Die treue HAUSFRAU.

By Herrand von Wildonie, ed. by K. F. Kummer, Wien, 1880.  
276 verses.

## Der arme HEINRICH.

By Hartmann von Aue, ed. by M. Haupt, Leipzig, 1881.  
1520 verses.

## HEINRICH und KUNIGUNDE.

By Eberhard von Erfurt, ed. by R. Bechstein, Quedlenburg and Leipzig,  
1860.  
4752 verses.

## HERZOG ERNST.

<i>Ernst A.</i> 325 verses	} ed. by Bartsch, Wien, 1869.
<i>Ernst B.</i> 6022 verses	
<i>Ernst C.</i> 1157 verses	

*Ernst D.* 5560 verses, ed. by F. G. v. d. Hagen and J. O. Büsching,  
*Deutsche Gedichte des Mittelalters*, Vol. 1.

## HILDEBRANDSLIED.

- (a) "Das ahd. Hildebrandslied," Müllenhoff and Scherer, *Denkmäler*,  
No. 2.  
68 verses.
- (b) "Das jüngere Hildebrandslied," ed. by E. Steinmeyer, in Müllenhoff  
and Scherer, *Denkmäler*, Vol. 2, 26 ff.  
80 verses.

## Die HOCHZEIT.

Ed. by A. Waag, *Kleinere d. Gedichte*, No. 9. Halle, 1890.  
1093 verses.

HÜRNEN SEYFRID, *see under S.*Der JÜNGERE TITUREL, *see under T.*

## IWEIN.

By Hartmann von Aue, ed. by G. F. Benecke and K. Lachmann, Berlin,  
1877.  
8166 verses.

## KAISERCHRONIK.

Ed. by E. Schröder, Mon. Germ., *Deutsche Chroniken*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1.  
Hannover, 1895.  
17,230-800-483 verses.

## KARL DER GROSSE.

By Stricker, ed. by Karl Bartsch, Quedlenburg and Leipzig, 1857.  
12,205 verses.

## KARL MEINET.

Ed. by A. v. Keller, Stuttgart, 1858. Stuttgart Lit. Verein, XLV.  
35,754 verses.

## Die KLAGE.

Ed. by Karl Bartsch, Leipzig, 1875.  
4360 verses.

KÖNIG ROTHER.

Ed. by H. Rückert, *Dichtungen des Mittelalters*, 1. Leipzig, 1872.  
5202 verses.

KREUTZFAHRT, *see under* LUDWIG.

Die KRONE DER ABENTEUER.

By Heinrich von Türlin, ed. by G. H. F. Scholl, Stuttgart Lit. Verein,  
Vol. 27. Stuttgart, 1852.  
30,038 verses.

KUDRUN.

Ed. by Karl Bartsch, Leipzig, 1867.  
6820 verses.

LANZELET.

By Ulrich von Zatzighoven, ed. by K. A. Hahn, Frankfurt a. M., 1845.  
9444 verses.

LAURIN und WALBERAN.

Ed. by Oskar Jänicke, Berlin, 1866. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 1.  
3146 verses.

LIET VON TROYE.

By Herbert von Fritslar, ed. by G. K. Frommann, Quedlenburg and  
Leipzig, 1837.  
18,458 verses.

LOHENGRIN.

Ed. by H. Rückert, Quedlenburg and Leipzig, 1858.  
7670 verses.

LORENGEL.

Ed. by W. Scherer, *Zeitschr. f. D. Altertum*, Vol. 15, 181 ff.  
2070 verses.

LUDWIGS DES FROMMEN KREUTZFAHRT.

Ed. by F. H. v. d. Hagen, Leipzig, 1854.  
8184 verses.

MAI und BEAFLOR.

By Pleier?, ed. by F. Pfeiffer, Leipzig, 1848.  
9638 verses.

Das MEERWUNDER.

Ed. by v. d. Hagen and Büsching, *Deutsche Gedichte des Mittelalters*,  
Vol. 11, 222 ff. Berlin, 1820.  
372 verses.

MEIER HELMBRECHT.

By Wernher der Gartenaere, ed. by Fr. Panzer, Halle a. S., 1902.  
1934 verses.

MELERANZ.

By Der Pleier, ed. by K. Bartsch, Stuttgart, 1861, Stutt. Lit. Verein.  
12,840 verses.

MERLIN.

By Albrecht von Scharfenberg, ed. by F. Panzer, Tübingen, 1902.  
Stuttgart Lit. Verein, Vol. 227.  
1869 verses.

MORIZ VON CRAON.

By Edw. Schröder, Berlin, 1894. In *Zwei altd. Rittermaeren*.  
1784 verses.

MUSPILLI.

Ed. by E. Steinmeyer, Müllenhoff und Scherer, *Denkmäler*, Vol. 1, No.  
III.  
103 verses.

Das NIBELUNGENLIED.

Ed. by K. Bartsch, Leipzig, 1866.  
19,676 verses.

ORENDEL.

Ed. by A. E. Berger, Bonn, 1888.  
3895 verses.

ORTNIT.

- (a) "Ortnit," ed. by Arthur Amelung, Berlin, 1871. *Deutsches Helden-*  
*buch*, Vol. 3.  
2388 verses.
- (b) "Ortnit C," ed. by Oskar Jänicke, Berlin, 1873. *Deutsches Helden-*  
*buch*, Vol. 4.  
267 verses.

Sant OSWALDES LEBEN.

Ed. by Ludwig Ettmüller, Zürich, 1835.  
3470 verses.

WIENER OSWALD.

Ed. by Geo. Baesecke, Heidelberg, 1912.  
1465 verses.

PANTALEON.

By Konrad von Würzburg, ed. by M. Haupt, *Zeitschr. f. d. Altertum*,  
Vol. 6, 193 ff.  
2158 verses.

PARTONOPIER und MELIUR.

By Konrad von Würzburg, ed. by K. Bartsch, Wien, 1871.  
21,784 verses.

PARZIVAL.

By Wolfram von Eschenbach, ed. by K. Bartsch, Leipzig, 1875.  
24,812 verses.

PETER DIEMRINGER VON STAUFENBERG.

By Egenold von Staufenberg, ed. by Edw. Schröder, Berlin, 1894. In  
*Zwei Altd. Rittermaeren*.  
1178 verses.

PYRAMUS und THISBE.

Ed. by M. Haupt, *Zeitschr. f. d. Altertum*, Vol. 6, 504 ff. Leipzig, 1848.  
488 verses.

RABENSCHLACHT.

Ed. by Ernst Martin, Berlin, 1866. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 2.  
6840 verses.

REINFRIED VON BRAUNSCHWEIG.

Ed. by K. Bartsch, Tübingen, 1871. *Stuttgart Lit. Verein*, Vol. 109.  
27,627 verses.

Der RITTER MIT DEM BOCK, *see under* GAURIEL.

ROLANDSLIED.

By Pfaffe Konrad, ed. by K. Bartsch, Leipzig, 1874. *Deutsches Dichtungen des Mittelalters*, Vol. 3.  
9094 verses.

ROSENGARTEN.

(a) "Ros. A," 1560 verses	} ed. by Geo. Holz, Halle a. S., 1893.
(b) "Ros. D," 2532 verses	
(c) "Ros. D <sup>1</sup> ," 890 verses	
(d) "Ros. D <sup>2</sup> ," 408 verses	
(e) "Ros. F," 452 verses	

ROTHER, *see under* KÖNIG ROTHER.

RUDOLF, *see under* GRAF RUDOLF.

RUODLIEB.

Ed. by F. Seiler, Halle, 1882.  
2328 verses.

SALMAN und MOROLF.

Ed. by Fr. Vogt, Halle, 1880.  
3915 verses.

SANKT FRANCISKEN LEBEN.

By Lamprecht von Regensburg, ed. by K. Weinhold, Paderborn, 1880.  
5049 verses.

SANT OSWALDES LEBEN, *see under* O.

Der SCHWANRITTER.

By Konrad von Würzburg, ed. by F. Roth, Frankfurt a. M., 1861.  
1358 verses.

SEIFRID DE ARDEMONT.

By Albrecht von Scharfenberg, ed. by F. Panzer, Tübingen, 1902.  
*Stuttgart Lit. Verein*, Vol. 227.  
3633 verses.

HUERNEN SEYFRID.

Ed. by v. d. Hagen and Büsching, *Deutsche Gedichte des Mittelalters*,  
Vol. 2.  
716 verses.



## SIGENOT.

Ed. by Julius Zupitza, Berlin, 1870. *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 5.  
572 verses.

## SILVESTER.

By Konrad von Würzburg, ed. by W. Grimm, Göttingen, 1841.  
5220 verses.

## TANDAREIS und FLORDIBEL.

By Der Pleier, ed. by F. Khull, Graz, 1885.  
18,339 verses.

## TITUREL.

By Wolfram von Eschenbach, ed. by K. Bartsch, Leipzig, 1875. With  
*Parzival*.  
952 verses.

## Der jüngere TITUREL.

By Albrecht von Scharfenberg, ed. by K. A. Hahn, Quedlenburg and  
Leipzig, 1842.  
43,449 verses.

## TOCHTER SYON.

By Lamprecht von Regensburg, ed. by K. Weinhold, Paderborn, 1880.  
4312 verses.

Die treue HAUSFRAU, *see under H.*

## TRISTAN.

- (a) "Tristrant." By Eilhart von Oberge, ed. by F. Lichtenstein,  
Strassburg, 1877.  
9524 verses.
- (b) By Gottfried von Strassburg, ed. by R. Bechstein, Leipzig, 1890.  
19,552 verses.
- (c) By Ulrich von Türheim, ed. by H. F. Massmann, Leipzig, 1843, in  
Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan und Isolt*, 492-590.  
3728 verses.
- (d) By Heinrich von Freiberg, ed. by Bechstein, Leipzig, 1877.  
6890 verses.

## TROJANISCHER KRIEG.

By Konrad von Würzburg, ed. by A. von Keller, Stuttgart, 1858. Stutt-  
gart Lit. Verein, Vol. 44.

## Der TURNEI VON NANTHEIZ.

By Konrad von Würzburg, ed. by K. Bartsch, Wien, 1871. Bound with  
*Partonopier*.  
1156 verses.

## VALENTIN und NAMELOS.

Ed. by W. Seelmann, *Niederd. Denkmäler*, IV, Norden and Leipzig, 1884.  
2646 verses.

VIRGINAL.

By Albrecht von Kemenaten, ed. by Julius Zupitza, Berlin, 1870.  
*Deutsches Heldenbuch*, Vol. 5.  
 14,261 verses.

WALTARIUS.

By Ekkehard, ed. by H. Althof, Leipzig, 1899-1905.  
 1456 verses.

WIENER OSWALD, *see under O.*

WIGALOIS.

By Wirnt von Gravenberg, ed. by F. Pfeiffer, Leipzig, 1847.  
 11,708 verses.

WIGAMUR.

Ed. by v. d. Hagen und Büsching, *Deutsche Gedichte des Mittelalters*,  
 Vol. 1.  
 6106 verses.

WILHELM VON ÖSTERREICH.

Ed. by E. Regel, *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*, Vol. 3. Berlin, 1906.  
 19,585 verses.

WILHELM VON WENDEN.

By Ulrich von Eschenbach, ed. by E. Toischer, Prag, 1876.  
 7940 verses.

WILLEHALM.

By Wolfram von Eschenbach, ed. by K. Lachman, in *Wolfram von  
 Eschenbach*, Berlin, 1891.  
 13,990 verses.

WILLEHALM.

By Ulrich von dem Türlin, ed. by S. Singer, Prag, 1893.  
 9695 verses.

WILLEHALM VON ORLENS.

By Rudolph von Ems, ed. by V. Junk, *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters*,  
 Vol. 2, Berlin, 1905.  
 15,689 verses.

WOLFDIETRICH.

- (a) "Wolfd. A," ed. by A. Amelung, Berlin, 1871. *Deutsches Helden-  
 buch*, Vol. 3.  
 2424 verses.
- (b) "Wolfd. B," ed. by Oskar Jänicke, *idem*.  
 3726 verses.
- (c) "Wolfd. C," ed. by Oskar Jänicke, Berlin, 1873. *Ibid.*, Vol. 4.  
 289 verses.
- (d) "Wolfd. D," ed. by Oskar Jänicke, *idem*.  
 2610 verses.

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